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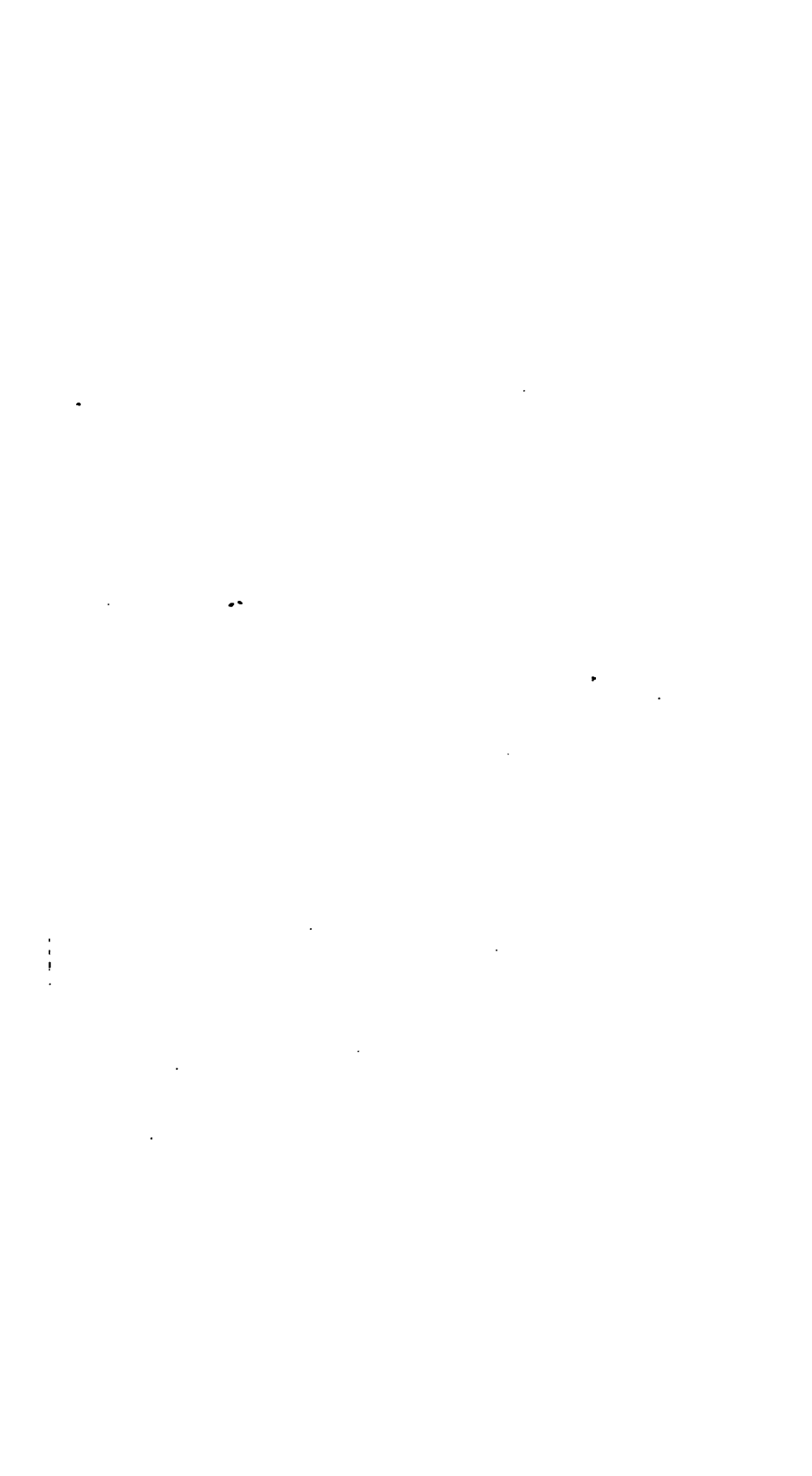
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THE
HALL AND THE HAMLET;
OR,
SCENES AND CHARACTERS
OF
COUNTRY LIFE.

BY
WILLIAM HOWITT,
AUTHOR OF
"THE BOOK OF THE SEASONS," "RURAL LIFE IN ENGLAND," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

IN these volumes I have endeavoured to give, principally in a narrative form, as faithful a portraiture of Life and Manners in the country, at the present day, as I have done in "The Rural Life of England" in a more purely descriptive style. All the narratives are founded on facts and characters that have been familiar to me. Some of the stories have appeared in popular periodicals; the greater portion of them, however, now issue from the press for the first time, and depict a state which people are every day more and more terming a transition state, and which, therefore, it is most desirable should be tending towards a better order of things. There is no greater source of original character than the country in England presents; to preserve this,

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while we advance the labouring classes by education, is a work worthy of the possessors of the soil of this great Empire. The HALL may, and must, do much to elevate the HAMLET, and the Hamlet, in a more enlightened and prosperous condition, can add much to the interest of living at the Hall. Every lover of his country must be anxious to see Rural Life so well and healthily balanced, that the old English character may wholly survive in the new English progress of Society.

THE AUTHOR.

Clapton, Nov. 20, 1847.

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THE HALL
AND
THE HAMLET.

VOL. I.

B

THE YORKSHIRE FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

As we deal very much with facts and realities in these tales and sketches, we must be careful not to localize too minutely. The aim of a writer should be to draw examples, lessons, and warnings from the actualities of human life, rather than to enable the common finger of the gossip to point to this or that person, this or that place, and say, "This is he!" "That is she!" "There is the place where they lived, and no other."

It is of little consequence what are the real names and residences of those whom we call forth to figure in our story: it is of great consequence that, while we are endeavouring to extract matter of benefit from what we have seen,

we do not give occasion for the indulgence of the most idle habits, or the exercise of the worst passions of our nature.

In Yorkshire then,—it is a pretty wide field of action, and clever must be the Goody Gossip that, in so broad a region, can hunt our fox to his actual hole,—there lived, and that not long ago, a well-known gentleman,—Marcus Welstead, Esq. Mr. Welstead was, at the time at which I shall commence my narrative, about sixty years of age. He was what is called a jovial gentleman, which does not always mean a roistering, or drinking, or gambling, or racketting, or dissipated, or chattering, empty-headed fellow; for Mr. Welstead was none of these. He was a man of sense, uncommon sense, all the county said; an able, long-headed, and active man of business. The whole country had a right to say this, for the whole country had had substantial proofs of it. Bad indeed is that generation that will not “speak well of the bridge that has carried it safe over;” and it was by no means a bad generation amongst whom Marcus Welstead, and his fathers before him for many generations, had lived. On the contrary it was a very hearty, honest, hospitable, and kindly and neighbourly generation.

They may talk of Yorkshire bites that will; there is no county of England in which I have been,

though I have been in almost all of them, in which you meet with more cordial welcomes, and friendly greetings, and where, if you will but *bite* their bread, and excellent bread it *is* too, they will set it before you, and make it still richer than when it comes out of their ovens, by smiles and pleasant jokes. The whole county then, around Marcus Welstead's habitation spoke well of him, just because he was a hearty, good Yorkshire man, and had spent his whole life in looking after their affairs rather than his own.

He was, in the first place, a magistrate, and this found him work enough to satisfy any ordinary man of business. He was not one of those rather common country gentlemen who are magistrates because they deem it to belong to their station, and would feel themselves greatly slighted if they were not named in her Majesty's Commission of the Peace. Marcus Welstead was, of course, pleased with being a magistrate, and proud of it, because that is natural, and he was a very natural man, though not a natural son, far less an unnatural son. He was not satisfied, however, to act as a justice of the peace just for the odd two or three months that he was down in the country, or would have been down in the country, had he been like many country gentlemen, and then to act with the same *nonchalance* that

THE HALL AND

he rode over his grounds or made a morning call. It did not satisfy him to follow his greyhounds, or carry his gun to the justice-room, once a week, there to make a few grave nods, ask the clerk what business there was, and then how it was to be disposed of, and so find that he must be at Lord Partridgefield's to luncheon, or at Sir John Staghound's to dinner; and then leave some such brother magistrate as Marcus to finish the affairs of poor devils of peasants, if they did not happen to be poachers.

Marcus Welstead was a man of business, and whatever he undertook, and it was a deal, he went right stoutly and steadily to the bottom of it. He had, with all his shrewdness, so much country simplicity about him, that he had never learned to make a distinction between the man who had a good coat on his back, and he who had a bad one, or no coat at all; between the man whose pockets happened to be ballasted with a heavy purse, and he whose pockets were worn out with feeling for—nothing. He was of such a plain, direct understanding, that he always insisted that a man was a man, however dressed, or addressed, and all the logic of the schools or the colleges, and he had been to both, never had been able to get him out of this vulgar opinion. Therefore he set himself to work to settle the disputes of people that had

nothing to give him in return but thanks, and any one knows the precise value of them,—every beggar sells them at a halfpenny per thousand. Nay, he stood up, and would have justice for poor wretches that some of his brethren of the bench, the moment they set eyes on them, declared to “have a gallows look,” and were in a prodigious hurry to send to that ancient terminator of disputed points. The evident consequence of this was, that he got the name amongst his brother magistrates of a dreadfully clever fellow, but still—crotchety. They would, indeed, have been well pleased to be rid of him, but that he saved them a world of trouble, and gave himself a whole system of worlds of it. Far and near came the people streaming from the whole country round to get justice from him, as if it were not to be got in every lordship of the county. Nor was it only on the weekly “justice-day,” it was every day of the week except Sunday, that he was engaged for some hours of the morning in hearing cases, and granting summonses, if the affair could not be settled at once.

For this purpose he was an early riser, and having refreshed himself with a book of his Homer, or a few pages of his Plato, for he was a passionate lover of the classics, and had carefully kept up his academical knowledge, he next forti-

fied himself with a good stout breakfast of coffee and beef, and then entered his little side room, that had a door into his court-yard, the steps of which were already besieged by a whole troop of applicants. Here you may see him as plain as can be. A man of middle height; of wide chest, broad shoulders, and altogether stoutly made. His drab trousers are already strapped down neatly over his boots, ready to mount his handsome bay mare the moment he has done his morning's work amongst his country neighbours. His blue coat with gilt buttons is handsomely cut, open, and showing his warm, figured waistcoat, and his gold watch-chain and seals dangling just beneath, as they have done for forty years at least. His somewhat short neck is lightly and narrowly tied with a blue checked silk handkerchief, and upon that a round, full, ruddy, lively face, and bald bullet head with snowy hair, hanging on each side, and falling on his velvet coat-collar.

That is Marcus Welstead. His large grey eye, overarched with a penthouse of strong, bristly hair, is full of fire and good-humour, as is his whole countenance. There is something knowing, able-headed, and self-complacent in his air, and as he throws himself into his great arm-chair, he says to his man, who serves at once in capacity

of valet and clerk,—“ Well, John, what have we this morning ? ” As John proceeds to tell him who are waiting, and on what account, he cuts him short with, “ Well, call the first of them in. Let’s to work.”

With a grave, yet cheerful, and somewhat loudish voice, he accosts the parties entering with, “ Well, my man, and what brings you here now ? ” And in five minutes he is as deeply and earnestly engaged in the affairs of the applicants and complainants as if they were of the utmost interest to him.

But we are describing him as present—we must look at him in the past. Besides the duties, or rather labours of this magistracy, he was executor to half the people round, arbitrator to others, and was consulted in all the affairs of the parish. These were still but a moiety of his engagements. He was a zealous politician. A Whig of the old school he called himself, and that, some fifty years ago, was thought something uncommonly radical. For this purpose he read regularly the daily papers, reserving these, however, for his afternoon treat. Then he had to talk public affairs over with those of his neighbours who were of like political faith, and ever and anon to attend, in the next market town, public meetings, where he took the first place, as chairman or principal speaker.

Marcus Welstead was known all over this large county as a warm, able, and unflinching reformer. Surely he had enough to do.

But, says some wise one, "Those who have so many irons in the fire are sure to let some of them burn." We can assure this clever body that he let none of *these* irons burn, unless it were with a little bit of over zeal. But, says the pertinacious suggestor, "His *own* affairs,—how did they go on?"

Hem! hem!—Marcus Welstead had a good landed estate. The rental could not be much less than two thousand a-year. He was reckoned too a good agriculturist. He was as prominent at the county cattle shows and agricultural meetings as anywhere else, though he never, that I heard of, came to have show cattle himself.

"Very true," says again this impertinent, intrusive, dogmatic body at my elbow,—“but was Mr. Welstead's estate well managed? Was it kept clear of debt? Did he, in fact, thrive as much in domestic management as public,—in his own affairs as in everybody else's?"

Hem! hem!—It is of no use bandying the matter with this screw-like person. Well, then, I am obliged to confess that old saws and proverbs were not altogether falsified in our friend Marcus. There *were* some encumbrances on his

estate, as, in fact, there are on who can say how many others? But these were not of his laying on. His father and his grandfather had had large families, and they had granted marriage settlements, and taken up money, which was not all, nay,—I may as well out with it at once, was far from being all cleared off again.

Marcus Welstead had no great family ; he had just three sons, and no more. He was not at all expensive in his habits, though he had a high sense of his family dignity, and would keep it up to a certain degree. He gave two or three good dinners in the course of the year. He had his old family carriage, in which he and his quiet lady-like wife rolled round to call on their neighbours, and not only rode a handsome horse himself, but his sons did the same. They were three fine young fellows, and none cut a better figure at the hunt, or the race-ground, or the county ball, than they.

But Marcus Welstead had a weakness. I cannot say but it was one that I admire in him as the sign of a good heart,—but his wife had often to tell him that it was a sad folly, and would be the ruin of him. He frequently kept bad servants, bad cattle, and bad horses on his farm, from the very idea of what was to become of the poor things if he did not keep them. “ There’s that

old lean cow," his wife would say—"Old Jacob tells me gives very little milk, and does not pay for her keep; why don't you let him sell her?"

"And if I sell her it must be to the butcher, she'll never make a milker again."

"Well, sell her to the butcher then."

"Poor old creature! why she's been on the farm here ten years. She's been a good creature, it's a pity to kill her."

"Nonsense! what are such creatures for but to be killed?"—but the old cow would still live on.

It was the same with the horses. If they were ailing, failing, or almost worn out, they lingered on, because the poor creatures, if sold, would get into bad hands, and be abused. It was the same with labourers. There was old Samuel, and old Thomas, they could hardly lift a spade, and were as slow and rusty as the old church clock, but what then? Were they to go to the work-house? Poor old fellows, it would be the death of them!

From sheer kind-heartedness, Marcus Welstead's estate was a man and beast hospital, instead of an active and stirring farm. His lands that were let, were let on easy terms, because all the tenants were old tenants, or sons of old tenants. Nay, his coachman and coach-horses were old and fat, and many a time, especially in

winter, did he persuade his wife to give up going to this and that evening party, because it would put old Redman, the coachman, and the horses to so much trouble, and would probably give them all colds.

If ever Mr. and Mrs. Welstead approached to anything like a quarrel, it was on this head. "It was the soft place in his head," she said,—“that was his foible, and it amounted,” she would sometimes add, “to downright foolishness;” on which he would reply, “Well, Jane, who would ever believe that you had a heart so hard?”

His steward, bailiff, or head farmer, for he united all these characters in his office, was himself an old man. He had been his father's bailiff, and was now upwards of seventy years of age; a grey, thin, slow, and drawling old fellow, that rode about the farm and to market on a bony white horse.

“Why don't you get a younger and more active farmer, Marcus?” his wife often said to him. “Jacob Scantlebury has been a good servant in his day, no doubt, though I fancy he must have always been of the slowest; but now he is past all endurance. To see him ride about like Death on his pale horse—oh! it is enough to give me a fever. There he goes, creep, creep: he is as long going through a gate, and shutting

it again after him, as would take a young, active man to ride to Redcliffe, and that's two miles. Why, Marcus, its enough to infect all your labourers with laziness to see him! He will sit on his white bag-of-bones and talk to the labourers as they are at work, and then they all raise their backs, lean on their spades or axes, and it's nothing but an hour-long gossip. Heavens! Marcus, why do you actually keep old men to do nothing, and an old bailiff to see that they do it? Oh! I've no patience with this slow old creature. He's rich, they tell me. Where's the harm then in dismissing him; nay, pension him off if you like,—it would be a great saving. For my part, I dread to meet him. He has always some long, jumbled story to tell. Never was a nickname better deserved than that which the villagers give him—Jumblin Jacob: and he is so long in beginning that I have often to say to him, 'Well, Jacob, what then? what have you to say?' And one day, I was so out of patience with the pause that he made between his, 'Weel, Madam Welstead,' and his communication, that I walked on, saying, 'Mr. Scantlebury, I will just take one turn round the garden while you get your mouth into motion.' The old man, honest and knowing as he is, is really a terrible bore; and it's you, Marcus, that make him so. He thinks he must

be moving, though it be as slow as a blind worm. Give him a retiring salary, and then he will take to his arm-chair, and be respectable."

But Mrs. Welstead might just as well have striven to induce her husband to give up his justicing⁷ and his politics as old Jacob Scantlebury. She was sure, in reply, to hear a great deal of Jacob's virtues, his trustiness, his long and faithful services; his shrewd knowledge of affairs, and valuable experiences.

"Shrewdness! knowledge of affairs!" Mrs. Welstead would sometimes burst out; "why everybody knows that the old man's intellect is so confused that he never can put a sentence together without a blunder; and then all his farming and his management are as old-fashioned as Methuselah. You want every new improvement on your estate to make it as productive as your neighbours'; draining, and cropping, and working, all quite different. My son George, who really has a turn for management, says, it is quite shocking how behind we are, and what we lose."

"Well, my dear," Marcus Welstead was pretty sure to retort, "Jacob does blunder in Scripture quotations. That's his foible and his failing. I wish he could let it alone; but he always did the same ever since I can remember him, and he cannot help it. He talks, in our good northern dialect, of

‘Loin upon loin, and pre-a-cept upon pre-a-cept,’ instead of ‘Line upon line,’ and so on ; and says a hundred times in the year that, ‘The race is not to the *strong*, nor the battle to the *swift*,’ but what of that ? We know the Scriptures ourselves, and understand what he means. And then for trustiness and experience, I will match Jacob against all the new-fangled bailiffs and farmers of Yorkshire. Jacob Scantlebury has been a valuable servant, and I may say *friend* to me, and to take him off his employment would break his heart. To tell me to dismiss him is just to say, ‘kill him at once.’”

The end of these conversations was generally Mrs. Welstead’s snappish remark, though accompanied by a very good-natured smile, “Well, Marcus, you will always have a set of poor creatures about you ; it’s your infatuation, and it’s no use contending against it.” It was only when she added, “Remember, what you waste on these old drones you take from your family,” that Marcus became angry.

CHAPTER II.

THE WELSTEAD FAMILY AND ITS POSITION.

THE three sons of Marcus Welstead were fast approaching the period of life when young men look for some measures being taken, and means applied, for introducing them to their future professions. The eldest, indeed, was already four-and-twenty, but he was looked upon as the heir to the estate, and might be said to have therefore entered on his proper path of life. They had all had a most excellent education. The eldest, George, had shown by far the least taste for the higher branches of knowledge. He was what was called a plain man; cut out for the country gentleman. Reading he had no distaste for, but it did not consist of the classics, for which his father had endeavoured to inspire him with a taste in common with his brothers. Poetry he

found little attraction in. The romances of Fielding, Richardson, and Smollet, with the essays of Addison, Steele, and Johnson, seemed to give him much pleasure ; but a good tract on planting, draining, and management of woods and estates, far more. He had no time for politics, and often ventured to advise his father to leave the nation to take care of itself; on which the old gentleman would exclaim, "George, George! if all people were of your mind, there would soon be neither people nor private affairs to take care of. We should have another Charles I. seizing our money without asking our leave, and putting an end to our grumbling with bayonets and bullets."

George was of a particularly grave temper. He was seldom seen to laugh, and his smiles had something more of ridicule than merriment in them. He was fond of his gun, was particular in everything that related to his horse, his greyhounds, his setters, and his breed of cock-spaniels, which were very handsome, and reckoned unrivalled. He was considered a very sensible, sedate young man by the neighbours, and likely to thrive and make a solid gentleman. He paid great attention to the affairs of the farm, in which he was perpetually encouraged by his mother, who took care often to praise his suggestions and plans ; and he in truth was making steady, if

not rapid inroads into the province of Jacob Scantlebury.

Charles, the second son, had reached his twentieth year, and had selected the profession of the law. Hitherto he had, however, only been studying its general principles, as a branch of his general education at the university, and now waited somewhat impatiently for the advancement of the means to proceed to London, and enter himself at one of the Inns of Court, to study for the bar. Charles partook somewhat of the gravity of his elder brother, though mixed up with a far more excitable and joyous temperament. Had he been more at ease in his circumstances, that is to say, had he had the means to pursue his intended course without delay and restriction, he would have been of a very gay mind. As it was, a cloud, an impatience, a secret uneasiness as to his future plans lay upon him, and gave him often a tinge of melancholy. This appearance was, perhaps, heightened by the style of his countenance, and the jet-blackness of his hair. In person he resembled his mother and her family. His features were fine. A handsomely-shaped nose, well-cut lips, and classically-moulded chin, with dark and expressive eyes, strong, dark eyebrows, and, as we have said, hair of raven jet, made him an object of notice and interest. He

was not so tall as his elder brother, who was full six feet high. He stood about five feet ten, of an active and vigorous mould, with broad shoulders, and a very graceful though manly carriage. He was passionately fond of field sports, shot with enthusiasm and wonderful accuracy, and was always one of the best mounted and most conspicuous in the hunting-field.

His younger brother, Philip, was about seventeen. A youth somewhat of his own complexion, but of a slighter make, and of a totally different style of face and character of mind. He was pronounced very handsome, but had a rather elongated oval face, of the most merry good nature. What attachment he had to books was owing to his brother Charles, to whom from a mere child he had clung with the greatest affection. He had always seemed to look to him as a model and protector, though he had never been able, nor indeed had seriously striven, to reach his high tone of character and aspiration. In all that related to amusement and rural sports, he was Charles's rival and companion. As boys, their bats, marbles, tops, and leaping-poles were in common. They set traps, pursued game in the woods, rode and joined the other youths of good family together. Philip was intended for the Church, but it was evident that he was made to enjoy life to the

utmost if fortune were favourable. To pore over books, to ponder on any great theme of action, those were not a part of his nature; it was to laugh, to sing, to dance, to give himself up to joy and enjoyment like a creature of the summer air. Everybody liked Philip. Even those who were inclined to admire Charles, shrunk somewhat from the solemn depth of his glance, but made themselves perfectly at home with Philip, and attached themselves warmly to him. He was always—"that charming fellow—that gay, good-hearted Philip."

Philip's gaiety had little yet to cloud it; but George and Charles had thought more seriously, and had dipped down into the reality of things. They had begun to reflect on much that had passed over their eyes and ears earlier with little questioning, and less rumination; and their mother's communications had thrown a clearer light on the actual position of affairs. George, though presumptive heir to the estate, had been desirous to rent a farm on his own account, and had pressed his father to advance the necessary capital. Charles wanted money to pursue his studies in London. Their father promised to see after these matters, but time went on, and no cash was forthcoming. "Time enough yet," said the father; but the young men, with the natural impatience of youth, thought that the time was wasting dread-

fully away. They turned to their mother for advice and sympathy, and soon drew from her the secret, that the estate was already burthened to a great extent, and that it was all that the remnant of income would do, after interest was paid, to keep up the present establishment.

This threw a terrible damp on the minds of the two elder sons. The one saw only the skeleton of an estate in prospect for him; and the other trembled for the means of securing the honourable and lucrative profession which was the goal of his ambition. Many were the cogitations and conversations of the mother and these two sons; many were the consultations together as to what was best to be done. But time went on as rapidly as ever, and the two brothers were still living at home, as far from a glimpse of hope for the future as ever. The effect of this on the mind of George was to embitter it. He was silent, shut up, and began to seem to take pleasure in contradicting his father, and took him up with short expressions that were neither respectful nor always *à propos*. This led to anger on the father's part, and tears on the mother's. Sadness, distrust, coldness, and a whole train of uncomfortable spirits got footing in the house and made it wretched.

Charles, though he felt deeply the impediment in his path of life, restrained his temper, for he

had a wonderful power of self-command. He saw that these circumstances caused the keenest unhappiness to his mother, and for her sake he resolved to put the best face on the matter that he could. He harboured no ill-will either to his father. He knew that his intentions were the best in the world. He knew that a more upright, high-minded man did not live ; and that were it in his power, all their difficulties would vanish like a cloud before the wind. He regarded him as the victim of a long series of inherited difficulties, and of mismanagement, to which he might be said to have been bred. He was, therefore, as cheerful as he could possibly be at home, and reserved his gloomy thoughts for his own solitary rides, and rambles with his gun.

But in these his feelings broke out, and were such as overwhelmed him with a misery which none but the most aspiring and sensitive natures suffer. The condition of the old estate and of the family seemed to his dispirited mind almost hopeless. What was there for it, he thought, but at his father's death to dispose of the first, and thus at once clear off these long accumulated debts, and wipe out the name and remembrance of the family from the place ;—of the family that for so many generations had lived there in honour and respect? His father's mind, he felt, must be the constant prey of

wearing anxieties ; nay, he must have suffered mortification from creditors,—probably haughty and vulgar creditors—the hardest of human trials for a refined mind to bear. These would probably shorten his days. He found that he could already see traces of the deep plough of care, and of premature decay.

And here were they, three young, active, and healthy men, to whom their father had given a high and expensive education, hanging as a burthen upon him when they should rather be exerting every energy and every faculty to relieve him, and spare him anxiety. Nay, they were adding most sharply to his trouble, and demanding from him impossibilities. But what were they to do ? Could they as gentlemen engage in anything without capital or introduction ? As gentlemen ? “Are we indeed, then, gentlemen?” asked he of himself. “What have I, more than the hedger and woodcutter, that should give me a claim to that title ? That should prevent me from taking an axe, or even spade, and earning an honest livelihood ?”

The very question occasioned him to break forth in a hysterical laugh as he strode along the brown moor, over which he was pacing, at a violent rate. “Yes,” he replied aloud—“we have many things ;—thanks to so much of fortune as has been ours. We have more grasp and eleva-

tion of mind. We have wider views; stronger impulses; more upward aspirations; we have the intellectual estate and the productive power of a liberal education. Thanks again to thee, good father, for that!"

"What are these," he added inwardly, and a spirit of new vigour seemed to spring up in his bosom at the reflection—"what are these but means and instruments of fortune? How many are they who have built the most magnificent fortunes on far less than these!"

As he arrived at this point of thought, he found himself also on the summit of a lofty hill, up which he had been springing with energetic strides for the last half hour. It was one of those broad based, easily upward sloping hills which in the south of England would have been clothed with a short turf, green and soft as velvet, and would have borne the name of down. But here, it had a far different hue and aspect. It was covered with thick heather, which at times was so deep as to encircle him to the waist, and make his progress through it a toilsome wading. At times, came open and green intervals, chiefly in the hollows, where the brightest waters ran laughing downward in the sun, and fern grew scatteredly, and huge brown blocks of stone lay tumbled here and there. From the summit where he now paused, before a

great square mass of rock, the view of the moorlands far around was dark almost to blackness. There was a stillness as of midnight, only broken by the shrill cries of birds of the waste, and the occasional mournful bleat of a sheep. There was something in the scene that was still inspiring and soothing to Charles Welstead. The fresh air was that which he had on these moorlands breathed from his boyhood. It came to his cheek and to his very heart as the freshest breath of life. It seemed to infuse into his veins and his very soul, strength, buoyancy, ardour, daring, and an actual eloquence of thought. Every glance that he turned on different sides fell on objects that had a peculiar charm for him, and reminding him of many, many hours of youthful gladness, and happy companionship on those hills, seemed to promise him more. They seemed to say, as with an audible voice of the dark brown, ancient desert—
“No, thou art not born to be miserable!”

He gazed far and wide. The clear, blue sky, spanned with its crystal, ethereal arch, the sombre and profoundly silent moorlands. Dark crags and isolated masses of rock stood as in enchanted dreams on ridge and in hollow. The sun sinking to the west, threw a flood of purple beauty over the black and undulating sea of heather, and the sunshine and the shadows of knolls and of scattered pine-trees, that

stood here and there on the heights, objects of vision in far distant places, made themselves more strongly distinct. Far off, on several sides, lay the cultivated and beautiful country. Thick with woods, scattered with villages, dark with deep and narrow valleys, or gleaming out with waters rudely flinging back the flames of the slanting sun. On one side, and that in the western shade, rose still higher and more dreary moorland ridges; but through an opening, and where the sunshine still lay in a westward-stretching glen, his eye fell on the tall chimneys of a distant manufacturing town. The smoke of these lofty columns of industry poured out in busy trails on the evening air, and amid the bright gleam of the misty sunlight, and brought to Charles's imagination a strange feeling of all the stir of trade, of invention, and accumulation, that was alive beneath and around them.

"There," thought he, "thousands of beings, almost day and night, eagerly pursue with unwearying zeal, the path of fortune; and why am I dreaming here? Why not descend there with the busy throng, and regardless of rank, opinion, or conventionalism, secure that which is the only solid foundation of them all?"

But an inward shrinking from the very idea of this crushing, elbowing, dusty way to wealth,

where the refined sensitiveness of education would stand a poor chance in the struggle with vulgar mind and hardness of nerve, made him feel in a moment that that was not the field for him. No, the habitual sentiments and sensations of all past life, he felt were too powerful for such a change, and he again turned his mind with a sadder tone to the anxious search for more means to carry out the legitimate object of his education. But here the gloom of the gathering evening fell mingled with that of his vain cogitations. He looked round; the sun had disappeared; the whole scene was black as pitch beneath his feet. The stars came out thinly and palely in the eastern sky, and in the gloom of the distant landscape the blaze of furnaces and coal-pits became visible.

He rose and descended towards home. The momentary enthusiasm that animated him in ascending was gone. His way homeward and life-ward were equally dark. He saw no outlet. He could call to mind no friend to whom he could apply for present help. There *were* friends and relatives, and those near ones, but he knew that they had advanced on the security of the estate to the full extent of their power or inclination. Again he thought, and an agony seemed to wring every limb as this thought spread over his mind, that

the eyes of the world,—of all their neighbours and acquaintances, were upon them. They, the wealthy, the fortunate, the proud,—they, he doubted not, knew well enough that family position to which he had only now opened his eyes. He now fancied insults where he had not suspected them before, and curious, prying impertinence in what he had only deemed a friendly interest.

“Well, Mr. Charles, we hear Mr. George is about to take a farm. So, when are you off to London, then? We thought we should have lost you before now.”

“Hang them!” he inwardly exclaimed, “I see their meaning more clearly now,” and he walked in a bitter silence. To a high, sensitive, aspiring mind, there is no situation so galling as that of a genteel poverty. He felt this sharply, and he looked upon himself as doomed to feel it more. To have to battle with it, and writhe under it—to see those far his inferiors in mind, person, and acquirements enjoying all the smiles of society, and himself taught to understand all the bitterness of the slight, the cut—in one word, the proud man’s contumely.

Yet a few hundred pounds would set him probably beyond all this, and enable him to assist those dearest to him. He required no luxuries,

no luxurious apartments for himself, while he pursued his studies in London. He knew that he could work hard, fare hard, and that, had he enough to procure the simplest accommodation, a good coat, and wherewithal to pay for books and necessary fees, a few years would see him fairly afloat in his profession. But whence to procure and how to depend on a regular supply of even the barest sum? He turned again to every quarter of the compass of affinity and acquaintance, but in vain. What security had he to offer? And who could be expected to credit him, a penniless adventurer, without some guarantee?

Save the uncle to whom we have referred, and who was the opposite to an exhausted receiver, for he was an exhausted lender, uncles and aunts he had none that could or would help him. Those serviceable creatures, maiden aunts, who so often serve as general accumulators in society, and who, while they secretly live lamenting in old-fashioned dusky chambers, amidst cats and tea-caddies, that they are barren shoots and useless members of the human family, are making from year to year a fertile heap rich with future happiness to others; and out of whose lonely silence by this means shall spring whole troops of skipping feet and laughing voices—of those he had none. There was old Jacob Scantlebury, indeed,—he was said

to be rich. He had got all that he had out of the family. He had always professed to have a great liking for the children of the family, "the bairns," as he still called them. Jacob Scantlebury *ought* to do such a thing at a period when he could repay a host of favours to the family. But then, Jacob, though religious, was always reckoned avaricious. Jacob himself pleaded poverty. Nobody could tell, if he *were* rich, where his riches lay. Nobody could point out any bank in which he was known to have any deposit, or estate on which he had a mortgage; nobody could shew where his fields or his houses lay. It might be all a fable, because Jacob was so close; and to ask and to be refused! He called to mind how he had heard Jacob quote and misquote the proverb, that "he who goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing," according to his version—

"He who goes a borrowing
Hoes a sorrow in."

How often had he heard him talk of the folly of young men till they were thirty; "They were a desert of heath that knows not when good comes." No, it was vain to seek help from him.

As he arrived at this conclusion he had advanced a good way up the deep woody valley that led towards Scatland Manor, his father's house. It was autumn, and the night had fallen rapidly,

and set in gloomily. The way on either side was overhung by thick trees, under which a winding stream hastened on somewhat rapidly between its deep banks. At times he could not see the narrow cart-track along which he passed, at times the scene opening on either hand, gave him a sombre glimpse of the sloping hills, and the pale western light still lingering on their ridges. It would have been difficult to say which was the most sad and shadowy, his path or his mood. A painful gloom and half despair lay with an aching sense on his heart. At a gate which crossed the way he paused for a moment, and gazed on the dimly-discerned scene. On his right hand, in a sort of combe or hollow, called thence Hodden Combe, stood amid the hills the abode of Jacob Scantlebury, the bailiff. It was a somewhat large cottage, that had once been whitewashed. It had a neglected, weather-beaten look. On one side of it stood a hay and corn rick; on the other, out-buildings and pieces of timber, and farm rollers, and heaps of mortar that had once been brought there for purposes of some repairs that now could not be guessed at, lay plentifully about. There burned a light in one window, and made all the rest seem only the darker.

On the opposite side of the road, and upon the very stream, stood a large brick building, that was

or had been a mill. There was its great water-wheel still standing, though in a state of rapid decay. The roof was tumbling in, and ruin seemed to have long amused himself in his solitary hours with all the windows, doors, and pales about it. The water from its dam, which was of strong stonework, rushed heavily over its stout oaken sluice-gates, which seemed by the ever-pouring flood to have been protected more than all else, from the progress of decay. But trees of considerable size sprang up here and there on its banks, and about the mill-yard, that bore testimony to the length of time that the premises had been disused, and seemed to draw extraordinary vigour from the heaps of rotting thatch which had fallen from the mill.

This old building had been to Charles and his brothers, as boys, a place of great resort and amusement. Here, before the decay had been so determined, owls had occupied it in abundance, and had been eagerly sought after by them for their eggs and young ones. Blackbirds, thrushes, fly-catchers, and a number of other birds, had built under the sheds, and in the holes in the walls and the thick bushes about the mill ; and they had spent many a summer afternoon in hunting them out, and in playing about the old place. But of late years it had become too total a ruin

for even many of these creatures, while advancing time carried on also their minds to other objects of pursuit. But in the present tone of Charles's mind, the sight of this scene of decay fell with peculiar force. "Yes," thought he, "that is the very picture of our fortunes. What a ruin it is become! and why a ruin at all? I have been told that in my grandfather's time this was the great and busy mill of the neighbourhood. Why was it suffered to go to decay? Why disused?" It must have been, it now occurred to him, because it required capital to carry it on; or a sum to keep it up that was inconvenient. Often as he had seen the place before, this idea had never presented itself to his mind. When he had asked his father why the mill was not worked, he had always said, "Why, Charles, would you like to be the miller? or would you have me to be one? It is not a thing to my fancy. I have other wheels at work that sufficiently occupy my time."

"Hem!" said somebody close by him on the other side of the gate. Charles started, looked; there was a dusky figure discernible in the gloom, which, however, did not seem to move.

"Who's there?" called Charles.

"Is that Mr. Charles?" replied a voice that he at once recognised as that of old Jacob. "Is that

you, Mr. Charles? ay, belim-me, is it? Nay-ah, who wad ha expectit to find you here just noo? Is aught ailing of you? or are you wa-ating o' somebody?"

"No, Jacob, I was just going homeward from a walk on the moorlands, and as I came opposite the old mill, I hardly know how, I could not help stopping and wondering at its ruinous look."

"Ay, Mr. Charles, it's a rueful, ruinous sight. It's going the way of all flesh; and I often think it's a pity, it's a pity loike. What a poor o' money it wad ha made by noo, if it had been kept ganging! And what a cumfort it wad ha bin for the neibors, poor creeturs, an noo a meeny on 'em are like to gang three or four moile to get their corn grun."

"And why was it not kept up, Jacob? That is the very question I want to ask,—why was it not kept up?"

"Weel, it wasna soo i' th' old meeaster's time. Then it ganged loike a sough through a wood, Mr. Charles. It was a reet cheery, heartsome seet, you may belie' me. Looads o' whe-at were cummin in, looads o' flour goeing out, and farmers cumming spanking up to offer their corn, and all was brisk as a bee. Ay, that war a pleasant time, belie' me."

"Then why let it stop? Why let it drop? Tell me that, Jacob."

Jacob gave no immediate reply. He put the pipe which he had just drawn thence, into his mouth again; stopped down the ashes with his finger, and began at once smoking and gazing hard towards the mill. Charles, who was accustomed to Jacob's long pauses, did not interrupt his silence, and at length Jacob broke it himself.

"Weel, there's nabody can justly tell that but th' squire his-sen. He never seemed to care about it, an when I told him that it wanted some repairs. 'Repairs, Jacob,' said he, 'it's na worth it. E'en let it drop.' And so the poor miller was like to tak his-sen off, an suk another pla-ase, an a sorrowful day I reckon it war for him, and th' mill war shut up, an's dropped and dropped away till it's what we see. It's a sorrowful seet to my thinking."

"And to mine too," added Charles, when Jacob once more put the pipe into his mouth, and puffed away with a sort of spurting sound to revive its dying glow. "To mine too, Jacob. Would it cost so *very* much to set it going again?"

"Cost!" said Jacob. Charles could not see his face, but he perceived by the tone that he

heard the question with surprise. "Cost? Why, yes, it would cost a tightish sum to repair it, and yet what it wants mo-astly is wood, and wood is plentiful enough on the esta-ate."

"But when once going, would it cost much to keep it going?"

"To keep it going? How should it? The fo-ak will bring their corn to grind, and you'd tak yer toll, an get yer price, and that wad keep th' miln a-going. A bra-ave tra-ade might be done here, I reckon, for th' country round is poplous, by a speritty fellow that had a mind to mak a penny."

"You think so?" said Charles, and a new light broke in upon him. What should prevent them from repairing and setting the old mill a-going? What it wants, said Jacob, is chiefly wood, and wood there is plenty on the estate. What should prevent him and his brothers setting on, and having the old mill repaired, and when he had made some profit, leaving it to the others, and winning his way to the bar with his share?

"Ay, wood enough is there," resumed Jacob, "and la-avour is che-ap enough. If it were th' will o' th' squire, a few months might see th' old miln all right again, an this little valley be turned into a valley of Joshyfat instead o' what it's long looked like, the valley of the shadder o' death."

“You are quite right, Jacob, you are quite right,” said Charles, bidding him “Good-night,” and striding away up the valley with a very different feeling to that with which ten minutes before had oppressed him.

CHAPTER III.

A STARTLING PROJECT.

To put the old mill into repair, to fell wood, square it, saw it up, set joiners, and tilers, and millwrights to work, that was the vision of the remainder of Charles Welstead's walk home. He already saw loaded wains coming and going; "the dusty miller's mealy face," looked out of the dusty mill door. There was the clack of the mill within, and the roar of the stream without, making a life in the old valley that had been so long silent. Scarcely was he in the house when he began to break his project to his brother George; but it is the fate of all speculations, however sane and promising, to be at first received with coldness; no, with something more like a heat of rejection. The idea comes suddenly on minds that are occupied with very different mat-

ters ; and is often thrown, as it were, out of the furnace of the projector's breast, with a startling force, on the hearer, and produces much the same effect as that of flinging a rocket or a fire-brand upon him. He starts, recoils, feels irritated, and flings it back again with scorn. How many a goodly scheme that might now be doing its service to the world, has been thus dashed to pieces, as it were, in the making ; being knocked down by the startled personage to whose admiration it has been hastily and abruptly presented. The projector has been taken suddenly aback ; been suddenly damped, has lost faith in his object, and has let it fall for ever.

When George Welstead heard Charles mention his scheme of setting up the old mill again : " The mill !" he exclaimed, " set it up again ! pull it down, I say, stick and stone. Why, it is a rotten unsightly nuisance ; it is long since it ought to have been cleared away. To restore it is impossible ; and besides, where are the funds ? Who is to pay for millwrights and bricklayers, for carpenters and tilers, and all that class ? I am sure my father won't ; indeed, he can't. Who is to maintain a miller, and purchase corn in the market ? And who is to go round and solicit custom, you, Charles, or I ? Will you stand in the market and poke your fingers into sample-bags, and

cheapen corn with the farmers and factors round ? It is ridiculous ! ”

Charles was rebuffed, and for a moment discouraged ; but he returned to the charge, and talked of the wood, and material on the estate ; told how it needed merely or chiefly, labour ; how the corn would, in a great measure, come in of itself, and that Jacob was quite an advocate of the scheme.

“ Jacob ! ” said George, smiling, “ if the mill be never repaired till old Jacob does it, it will not be done in our time ; and if it grind no faster than old Jacob moves, it will certainly quite have enough to do to grind for all that come with a batch. Charles, you amaze me. Repair the old mill on the suggestion of old Jumbling Jacob ! are you crazed ? ”

Charles made no reply, but still it did not quit his thoughts as a crazy scheme. He still thought of it, and in the night dreamed of it. He and Jacob were felling oaks, and ashes, and alder, and fir trees. Jacob was one of the sons of the prophets, and let his axe-head fall into the mill-stream ; and then, he was the prophet himself, and flung the handle in after it, and it sunk, or rather dived after the head, and they came up together all right, and as fast as ever. The mill was busily at work before they had repaired it ; and yet they

were repairing, and George was carting corn, and Philip was carrying sacks up into the mill, and their father was head miller, all white from top to toe, and as merry as possible.

In the morning at breakfast, he found his father just in as jocose a humour as he had been in the dream ; and, as a good way of opening the subject, for he determined to do it, he set on and told it. All laughed heartily, none more than the old gentleman himself ; and the mother was infinitely amused at the idea of Marcus being the old miller of the Combe Mill. But what astonished Charles no little was, to hear George, when the merriment was somewhat over, say—" And by-the-bye, why should not the old mill be repaired and set to work ? There is a deal of money lost there, and a deal of usefulness to the neighbourhood. What say you, sir, to turning miller in reality ?"

" I turning miller !" exclaimed the old gentleman, still laughing, but somewhat surprised. " Well done, George ! and you waggoner, and Phil here miller's man, and Charles millwright ! Capital ! The industrious family ! And your mother turn her parlour into a flour shop, and instead of her spinette and her Chinese cabinet, set up a counter and a pair of scales. By Jove ! that *would* make a fine subject for a ballad or a romance. The Yorkshire squire turned miller ; and maltster perhaps—why not ?"

“ But without a joke,” added Charles, “ I think the scheme not so bad, father. See here, what should ail us three active fellows now, undertaking the restoration of this mill? It is doing no good now, nor we either, that I can see, and if it were at work, it might do us all good.”

The old gentleman gave a curious, wondering look at Charles, and went on with his breakfast in silence.

The subject was not mentioned again for some days; but it did not the less occupy the thoughts of Charles and George. Charles found that George, on turning the thing over, had soon begun to find it anything but ridiculous. He had weighed Jacob's plan of felling timber, and effecting the restoration almost of themselves; and he came to the conclusion, that if their father sanctioned it, it might be carried through, and would certainly be exceedingly profitable. The two young men now talked over and over the scheme, zealously. They went and discussed it with Jacob, and he still asserted that the old gentleman's approval was all that was requisite, that it was quite practicable and would be *creditable*.

Charles seized on that last word of Jacob, and ruminated on it, and coined out of it much good argument. His father thought it unfitting the character of a gentleman to be setting up this

mill ; and setting it up, for so it must be if done at all, pretty much of themselves. But it would be *creditable*, said Jacob, and Charles soon thought that he could make that word tell on his father's mind.

One evening, therefore, he introduced the subject again ; but the old gentleman received it pretty much as he would have received a sharp cut on the back with a whip.

" Bless me ! Charles, hav'n't you done with that nonsense yet ? Have you been dreaming again ? Why, man, it would cost 500*l.* to set the old mill a-going, and it wouldn't cost twenty to clear it quite away."

" Yes, sir, but how many five hundreds would it soon bring in ?"

" Bring in ! Fire and fiddlesticks, where are the 500*l.* to come from ? Ask old Jacob that ? Ask *him* whether the old mill had better be set up again ?"

" Why, father, old Jacob says yes, if that be all. It's a scheme of his own. He wishes to see it done of all things."

The old gentleman stared as if he could not believe his ears.

" Old Jacob says so ! Old Jacob's own scheme ! Wishes to see it of all things ! Why, I never

heard old Jacob say a syllable these ten years on the subject, though he has often begged me to pull it down, and repair other buildings with the brick."

"That may be," said George, "but nevertheless, it is as Charles says; old Jacob, I suppose, has grown wiser, for sure enough, he is quite for it."

"Then old Jacob's cracked!" said their father, sharply; "he's grown as superannuated as his horse; Does old Jacob mean to turn miller himself, or does he mean me to turn miller? I can tell him that *I* am not going to work the hopper, and that I need not have spent quite so much on your education to make millers and meal-sack heavers of you. A pretty story the country would have by the end!"

"Well, sir, old Jacob," said Charles, "may be superannuated, but I don't think this scheme is just a proof of it. He thinks, too, that the restoration of the mill would be *creditable* to us."

"Creditable!"

"Yes. He says a busy, profitable mill is a credit to any man's estate; but a ruin, except it be that of a castle, or an abbey, which he calls a 'natral phenomum,' is a rag of poverty."

"Did Jacob say *that*?" exclaimed the father,

reddening deeply and looking terribly incensed. "The old rascal! but he is certainly demented. I shall very soon take a reckoning with him, a stupid, drawling old varlet!"

The family had never heard him apply such terms to Jacob before; and the mother, who had often urged her husband to this very point in vain, could not help smiling, spite of her husband's evident anger.

"I think Jacob Scantlebury is quite right," said George, gravely, and somewhat bluntly; "I do think the old dilapidated mill has a very discreditable look; and I am of Charles's opinion that it would be a very good thing to repair it."

"Well, lads, said Mr. Welstead, "just as you like! If you would rather be millers than gentlemen, if you had rather bolt flour than handle briefs, and prefer a meal-sack to a sermon, I say no more. In Heaven's name, just as you and Jacob Scantlebury think fit."

"You give us free leave then?" said George.

"Free leave; just what you will, only don't ask me to do anything; I wash my hands of it." And with that he left them.

"Are we to take my father at his word?" asked Charles of his mother, as soon as the door was closed. "Does he really consent?"

"Oh yes," said the mother; "I certainly take

it so, but it will be as well to ask him again before you set to work."

The mother had been fully instructed in the views of the sons, and had readily come into their plans and hopes.

"We shall want leave to cut timber," said George, "and to know what and where we may cut. We shall want to burn brick, and lime, and also to get some stone from the quarry."

"Leave that to me," said the mother, "I will watch for the right moment to put in these requests, and to set your plans in the best light."

In a few days their mother told them that they had their father's full permission to cut as much timber as they would want, in the woods below the mill. Old Jacob knew as well as he did, said their father, what he *would not* have cut. They could get all that they wanted under Jacob's superintendence. He left it to him. "Your father has evidently been considerably influenced by the idea of its being *creditable* to the estate, but he still," added she, "says that you must look for no help from him besides the material, 'and they'll soon find themselves,' said he 'in a fix, depend upon it.'"

The young men needed no second assurance. They were speedily off to old Jacob. In less than an hour the old man was mounted on his

white horse Wildfire, and accompanying the two young men, for Philip did not yet bestir himself much with the matter, at no very fiery pace down the valley.

Charles, in his high spirits, begged old Jacob to poke up his Wildfire, and make it burn a little brisker. "By-the-bye," added he, "how in the world did this creature of yours ever get such a name?"

"O he's been a verra fiery and terrible horse in his day, Mr. Charles. He was ridden by the famous Colonel Tarlton i' th' American war."

"Really!"

"Ay really. Many a time he'd the colonel on his back in those slapdash expeditions of his i' th' Carolines, when he made the 'Mericans fly like the leaves of their own forests. He saved his life at the Cowpens, and, as I ha heard, at the bloody battle of Guildford Manor House. O he was a terrable un he was, by all accounts. Many's the 'Merican, and the Englishman maybe too, poor fellow, that he's dashed under his hoofs, and spurned the life out on him, though you wadna think it noo."

"No," said Charles, patting the stark and bony old horse; "he has certainly burned all his fire out, and has nothing left but his white ashes. But how came you by him, Jacob?"

“He was given to your honoured father, Mr. Charles, by a relation o’ th’ colonel’s, and he gave him to me, on condition that he lives his life out. I reckon he’s five-and-twenty years old, if he be anything.”

Thus talked they as they descended to the valley, entered first one field and then another, and were soon deep at once in the woods, and in the collection of timber for beams, spars, joists, and all the various purposes of doors, window-frames, mill-work, and what not. Jacob was become all at once an oracle with them. It turned out that he had been apprenticed to a carpenter, and had come to Mr. Welstead’s originally in that character, whence by degrees he had slid into his present, and for many years past, multifarious one. He could tell what sort of wood was the best for all sorts of uses, and gave them his reasons for it.

“Oak, good heart of oak, young gentlemen, you must have for your great wheel,—it will stand the constant changes of wet and dry; oak for your beams, and joists and spars. Ash, I say, for your solid mill floor; alder for your cog work; and deal, good clean deal, for your jambs and window-frames, and all such work. Your doors and shutters, and shed work, and upper floors, will be good enough of Scotch fir, and there’s

plenty of that on the moors, and your father can fell them, for he's lord o' th' manor. It's just the time of the year too. We'll down we'em noo, and by spring they will have all their sap swunged out of them by rain, and wind and frost, and be ready to cut up and work."

The whole souls of the young men were soon regularly engaged in the enterprise. Trees were marked for felling; lime was found for digging; there was a kiln already on the ground for the use of the farm. Men were set to dig sand for the mortar, and when this was done, to strip all the remaining tiles and thatch from the mill and its buildings; to pull down all its rotten wood-work, its crumbling doors and window-frames, its old rafters, and inner fittings-up, and these were collected and burned out of the way. The old mill in a month presented only bare walls, but these were strong and sound, and its main beams, of solid heart of oak, had resisted all the corroding force of the elements. Soon were axes and saws heard in the woods, and many a goodly tree came crashing to the ground. They had been selected here and there where they would be little missed, and many of them such as were past their best, and would give their neighbours breathing-space by their removal.

The only point on which old Jacob and the

young men came to a strift, and this was rather between him and Charles, was about the Scotch firs on the moorland hills.

“ We shall want plenty of common deal boards, and slabs for fencing,” said he, as he was passing sentence on a multitude of them, but as he lifted his sacrilegious chalk against first one and then another of these fine old heroes of the waste, Charles cried out, “ No, no ! not that, not that ! ” There was scarcely one of them that was not in his eyes an ornament to the scene, of indispensable beauty. They were all old friends and companions. He had sported under them, watched under them in silence the wild creatures of the desert, and had a thousand delightful associations bound up with them. There was scarcely one, especially of the scattered ones, that did not, with its dark and spreading arms, give a peculiar charm to the solitary heath.

But old Jacob saw no beauty in them. “ They are an ugly tree to my fancy,” said he. “ Black they are, summer and winter, and only serve to make this sterile waste more sterile. Solomon cut down the verra cedars of Lebanon to build his temple, and though I do not mean to compare Hodden Combe Mill to Solomon’s Temple, I think a Scotch fir is none too good for its use, and barely good enough. When we’ve felled the oaks

of Ba-ashon, why need we make so much ado with an ugly fir-tree?"

Still Charles put in his veto against the fall of many of them.

"Weel, weel," said Jacob, "e'en let's do as Solomon did by th' two strange women as quarrelled about their barns. He said bringt barns here and cut em e-two, and gie to each mother one on em."

"You're not quite right there, Jacob," said Charles; "he only was for cutting one of them in two, and giving each woman half."

"Weel, weel, Mr. Charles, it may be soo; it's Scripture ony hoo; so let's cut half doon, an I'm content."

The young men laughed, and they finally selected such as were least missed, and substituted some poplars instead for flooring, as Jacob said it was good against fire, "for it wadna burn."

Through the long winter the work still went on briskly. The timber was squared, the boughs cut and stacked for firewood, and the young men had grown so interested in their work, that though at first they were rather shy of handling tools, and looking like workmen, especially before actual workmen, they had by degrees grown out of all that, and now swung the axe and drove the

wedge with a perfect enthusiasm of pleasure. They had their men from the sand-digging and lime-digging, to dig a saw-pit for them in the opening of the wood, and engaged a pair of sawyers to begin ripping up trees for spars and boards, so that they could be piled in the air for seasoning. They were daily in the wood helping their carters to load and carry the timber from the various spots where it lay to the sawpit; and they were often to be found at the smith's, to overlook the preparation of various pieces of iron-work that the carpenter and mill-wright had said must be got ready beforehand. Jacob had engaged a mill-wright and his men, who were to work by the day, and do the carpentering too. With these, who were simple, old-fashioned fellows, the young men soon felt little scruple at working almost as constantly and with far more zeal. Nay, the sawyers having gone off to some other job, saying they would be back time enough to do the work here, Charles and Philip actually got a saw from the old mill-wright, and under his directions were soon as expert at the operation as if they had been apprenticed to it.

"Ay, ay," said old Jacob, as he used to sit on Wildfire and look at them, "it's true as gospel, where there's a will there's a way; a willing mind is worth ten team of horses."

It must have been an amusing sight to some of their fine acquaintance, had they beheld these two handsome young men in workmen's jackets and loose trowsers, setting out their timber with rule and compasses for sawing, marking it with a line and red chalk, rolling it upon the pit, and then, Charles above and Philip below, sawing away as steadily as Time himself, if Time ever were to exchange his great job of mowing for one of sawing by way of variety. There was but one little accident to mark the want of experience in our workmen, and that was that Charles, as top-sawyer, once cut through his shoe, and was very near splitting his great toe, by putting it too near the saw-gate, and, in his start at the accident, gave the saw such a sudden jerk, that the handle at the bottom, which Philip had, in *his* want of experience, probably not wedged fast enough, flew off, and the back of the saw cut Philip's chin very exactly in the centre. Neither wound, however, was very serious. The brothers laughed at the ridiculousness of their appearance as they hastened home, Charles with a bloody foot, and Philip with a bloody handkerchief to his chin, to get their hurts dressed.

This little accident did not fail to occasion much merriment, and plenty of biting jokes on the part of the father, as gentlemen sawyers, and

so on ; and predictions that they would be dog-sick of the business before they had done with it ; but it was the only mishap that they had. Blistered hands and fatigued limbs they often had, yet never did they look so handsome or seem so happy ; and often, after a hard day of sawing or timber-carrying in the solitary woodlands, they would appear at some gay party in the neighbourhood, the gayest of the gay, and dance till the dawn. Their labours were so completely secluded in their own thick and untracked woodlands, that they were not exposed to curious eyes ; and their father, though he never allowed that he was so in direct words, could not avoid by his good-humour and jocose remarks, shewing that he was inwardly proud of their zeal and skill, and interested in their enterprise.

It may be asked whence the necessary funds were to come from for their scheme. There was, in reality, little money needed. They had plenty of timber, the great requisite material. The iron-work of the machinery was found to be so massy and strong, that there needed little new ; what was chiefly wanted was a little repairing at the smithy. The mill-wright agreed to take a quantity of timber for his labour ; the rest of the men, with the exception of the sawyers, to whom they had sent word not to return, were such as be-

longed to the farm. In fact, when Jacob had been asked by George and Charles how the necessary funds were to be raised, seeing that their father would have no concern in it, he had replied, that if Mr. Welstead would give him leave to do as he pleased in the matter, he should never be asked for a shilling, and he would take upon him to say that when it was done he should be well satisfied. To this the old gentleman had given his consent, and Jacob had soon agreed for the sale of as much timber as should cover the actual outlay of actual cash.

Spring came. There was a goodly show in their woodland timber-yard of sawn planks, spars, &c., reared to catch the searching breezes of March. The wheelwright, however, did not find any seasoned enough for his use, and proposed to exchange dry timber from his own yard for an equivalent of fresh timber from the wood, which Jacob engaged to carry for him. He proposed to have the roof got on first, that his mill-work might be proceeding under shelter, and the rest of the timber might be drying in the open air, with the benefit of the warm weather of the advancing summer. Sufficiently old-seasoned timber from Jacob's yard was found for this purpose, and in a few weeks the tilers were seen aloft on the roof, and the mill was covered in.

Great interest was then felt in the progress of the machinery of the mill. The great water-wheel was before long complete, and great was the delight as the water was let in upon it, and it began to make its dashing and splashing revolutions. But in the midst of this progress and excitement, an event of still greater moment took place in the neighbourhood, which for a time eclipsed the fascination of this, and made a great sensation throughout all the surrounding district.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW NEIGHBOURS.

SCARTLAND MANOR, the residence of Marcus Welstead, lay in a valley, in that part somewhat widely spread out, and with pleasant uplands sloping away on either side in a manner not very steep, and which gave very charming views of their cultivated fields, with their hedge-rows and hedge-row trees of a fine growth. Below, the valley contracted itself, and was, as we have said, very thickly wooded. In the depths of this valley stood the mill, which was at this moment a concern of so much interest, and of high hopes. Beyond, to the west and north, rose those wild, dark moorlands, with their sombre heath, their scattered Scotch firs lifting their heads here and there on the highest points, and along the slopes and ridges of the fells, as they were there called.

To the east and south rose still nearer hills, but cultivated, and scattered with woodlands. To the east, on a conspicuous elevation, stood a large white house, which was seen far round to a great distance, and to those living about the sides of the western moorlands often appearing at evening to be all in brilliant flame, from the reflection of the setting sun on its numerous and large windows, and also on an observatory that surmounted it. This house was called Barhead, probably because it stood at the termination of a bar, or long ridge of hill, which near it was pretty abruptly terminated by the narrow dale through which rushed the same deep, strong stream that, lower down, served the Combe mill.

Barhead House had formerly been the scene of much gaiety. The proprietor had had a large family, the children of three successive marriages, of whom no less than half-a-dozen were the daughters of his last wife. He was himself a quiet and inoffensive sort of personage, but had either a good deal of ambition hidden under the still exterior, or had been spurred on by the ambition of one or more of his wives. His estate was a fine stretch of lands and woods lying chiefly beyond the hill away from Scartland, and terminating in a rich plain, of which the fat acres brought in a rental of no less than four

pounds per acre, and of which he was the possessor of so many, that his rental ledger showed a fair yearly balance of £6,000. Wealth of coals and ironstone lay also imbedded in this estate, and many a tall chimney, sending out a thick black smoke, and many a screaming engine and piece of machinery of one kind or another, showed that his mineral wealth was busily worked.

Gay was the life that was led at Barhead House. It was a noble mansion. Beautiful were the sloping fields and park that lay around it, and beautiful the winding carriage roads that led to it beneath fine old trees, sweeping their long aristocratic branches down, till they touched the soft, short, aristocratic turf beneath. Neat were the lodges which admitted you, come which way you would to this enchanted ground; with their pleasant sunny gardens, rows of bee-hives, climbing plants, and neat matron, or blushing, modest maiden to unlock the charmed gates and let you pass.

Not less delightful was the Hall when you drew near it. The herds of deer seen under the spreading beeches in the park, the fine, high-bred cattle grazing, with here and there high-bred horses whisking their tails, and strolling leisurely from spot to spot; the neat iron flakes, or hurdles, which fenced in the well-mown sides of the car-

riage way; and the pleasure grounds, walks, and avenues, and rustic seats that caught your eye on the one side or the other, all impressed you with a feeling of the wealth of the owners. And this feeling was further inspired by the pillared portico of the house, its quiet air of true aristocratic life. Its doors opened, and admitted you to an equally impressive and lordly hall, with rows of columns, and figures of graceful and valuable statuary. These were but the fitting approaches to suites of ample and richly-furnished apartments, that gave equal view of the wealth of art within, and the wealth of nature without, for from the windows glorious were the scenes over which the eye ranged,—woods, waters, hills, and far-stretching plains.

The possessor of this most enviable estate had inherited it from a tolerably long line of ancestors, but his taste had greatly embellished it, and the times had greatly increased its value. We have said that it produced in rental six thousand pounds, but this was but a small portion of the expenditure of its proprietor; that was at least three times that sum. He had long had a seat in Parliament, and through the aristocratic circles in which he moved, he made a marriage, not as his fathers had done, with the squiral families of his own neighbourhood, but into a titled one. His

daughters were handsome, and they married into titled ones too; nay, one soon mounted into splendid misery and a ducal coronet. His sons served in the army and navy. He was at once highly allied, and serving his country, according to his notions, in the field, on the flood, and in the senate. Such a man had, of consequence, many friends, and many expenses. His fêtes in town were succeeded by fêtes in the country. Game, in his absence, accumulated prodigiously, for his keepers were numerous and well paid, and very active, and very sturdy. His plantations were excellently stretched along the sides of the corn-fields of his farmers, poachers were sent to prison to grow lean, and his hares and pheasants grew extremely fat. During the recess of Parliament, therefore, troops of friends came down, and terrible were the battues and the slaughter of those fatted creatures. Coal mines vomited forth heaps of wealth, which daughters wanted as dowries. The worthy man led a jolly life; his wives were jolly, one after another, for he had had three; his sons and daughters, and sons and daughters in-law, were jolly, too. He died — and it was found that £18,000 a year had not been *quite* enough to maintain all this jollity, — there was a trifling debt of £100,000.

It was amazing what a silence fell on the place

at this *dénouement*. How the gay people were no longer seen ; how few shots were heard for a long time in the woods ; how the fine, high-bred horses gradually disappeared, and the high-bred cattle followed them, and were succeeded by great herds of Scotch and Herefordshire bullocks, and flocks of sheep, which were said to be grazed there at so much per head. The son of this gay old father, the eldest I mean, if he came there, came not to live, and came alone. The house stood empty ; the gardens, great and splendid as they were, were let to market gardeners, and a doleful spirit of desolation seemed to brood over the whole estate. Of the sons and daughters little was heard. They disappeared in the gay mob to which they belonged, only it was rumoured that some of the younger sons had been discovered on farms in Canada and Australia.

This had now continued some seven years. The park and home-farm, like the gardens, were let to farmers and graziers ; the rents were collected by agents from London, and the game, like the land, was vulgarly let and sent to market. The coal fields, and all their machinery, stood desolate, unoccupied, and falling to decay. But all at once there came the report that the gentleman to whom the sum of £100,000 was owing on the estates,

was come from India, where he had spent the greater part of his life, had foreclosed the mortgage, and was actually coming to reside there with his family.

Great was the sensation throughout the whole country round. The rich were agog with a thousand speculations, and wonderings and anticipations connected with these new and splendid neighbours. The poor, especially the colliers and miners, were equally agog at the idea of a new soul being put into all the defunct mines, pits, engines, and half tumbling machinery on the estate; and work, and wages, and a merry life being again as universal as formerly. Tradesmen looked into their books and gazed down the long and heavy columns of consumable articles that used to travel daily in light spring-carts up to that glorious Barhead; and first gave a sigh to the long, blank vacancy that had succeeded in those interesting pages, and then a smile at the coming good. Everybody was exhilarated at the idea of the money that was about to flow again through the neighbourhood; farmers, graziers, carriers, publicans, all and every species of marketing and marketable men, were alert, and in better spirits than they had been for seven years. Money, that rich fruitage of life, was about to fall like manna

from the heavenly height of Barhead, and a very awkwardly made pocket that would be into which some of it did not drop.

Many were the rumours that from day to day grew about the new-comers. Contradictory they were of course, but that was only the luckier, for it gave occasion for discussion. What mattered it if one day knocked down what the day before had built up? The next day would build a pile of *actual facts* greater than all the former rumours together. Facts clashed with facts, and shivered each other. No matter, they still grew by some means or other, and eventually took this shape.

The family was that of Sir Thomas Borringdon. He was a great nabob; that is, had spent his life from a very early age in India, and was believed to have brought half the wealth of India home with him, without at all diminishing the miraculous whole still left there. A very rich, very proud, very stylish family it was said to be. At this news how many hearts, of many also very rich, very proud, and very stylish families, in the vicinity went pit-a-pat at the idea that *they* should be amongst the first to share the distinguished acquaintance of so distinguished a family, and how many others were racked with the hopes and fears as to how and where they should stand in the acquaintance.

Sir Thomas was said to be a very good sort of man; though he had been accused of making most astonishing heaps of money by collecting the revenues from the poor Ryots of India, in which process some half million of them yearly had been famished to death. But that was no fault of his; that was the way in India.

Sir Thomas had purchased his wealth, it was also said, at the highest price that any man could give for it—we do not mean at the cost of these millions of mere Indians, made only to die of famine, nor at that of his conscience, and his moral constitution, but of his health. Had his liver been as sound as his land at Barhead, a happy man had he been! But this northern air was supposed to be bracing and good for him; and there was no knowing what it might do for him. “Kill him!” whispered the doctors, but not so loud as to reach his ears, and frighten him from coming. Then his wife—ah! that was a charming creature! A French lady she was, and such a model of ease and grace, and smiling politeness, though high, very high, on occasion.

There was a son of whom nobody seemed to know much, but the daughters, two or three, some said four, of the most beautiful creatures that the sun of England had ever had the pleasure of shining upon—and so accomplished! Only

imagine that well, ye young men! Such accomplishments, such beauty, such wealth, all coming to Barhead! If the neighbourhood had not been in effervescence, it had been no neighbourhood at all.

And the coming was no fiction. Marcus Welstead, as a gentleman everywhere so well known for his liberality and activity, had actually received the honour of a letter from the great Sir Thomas, begging him, as a neighbour on whose character and proximity he built much hope of friendship, to do him the favour to ride up to Barhead, and after giving a glance at the condition of the place, to give orders to such tradesmen as were most proper to put all in order for their coming in the spring. There could not have been a fitter man for such a commission of friendship, than Marcus Welstead; nor a commission more exactly to his taste.

After reading this letter to himself one morning at breakfast, turning very red, looking very bright, and giving three or four surprising hems, he said to his wondering family, who saw that something extraordinary lay in the bit of paper,—“Well now I *do* take this as very kind of Sir Thomas. With the greatest pleasure,—yes, with the greatest pleasure will I do what he wants. I take it very kind of him, very indeed!” Whereupon, he read aloud the letter whose con-

tents have already transpired to the reader. That morning he soon dismissed the applicants for justice, and in the most agreeable and effectual way. It was only by announcing to them that he must make dispatch, for Sir Thomas Borringdon had begged of him to make some immediate arrangements for his coming, and he must away to Barhead. At this news everybody's business took a new and sudden turn. Angry looks grew calm; this party found that their matters could be quietly settled; another person that he could defer his to another week,—he actually found, indeed, that he should be able thus to get further information; and all the rest were most happy to attend any other day that Mr. Welstead might appoint. In fact, every man was in a hurry to be the first off to spread the news that Sir Thomas was actually coming. Marcus Welstead was soon up at Barhead on his chestnut mare; soon rode here and there, and had messages sent off to the next town for half a dozen tradesmen. In a few weeks he was able to write to Sir Thomas that he and his *amiable* family—Marcus had never seen one of them, but in the goodness of his heart, of course, he made quite sure that the whole family was most amiable,—would find all ready for them whenever they should honour the county by coming into it. Not the less did Marcus, how-

ever, every day ride up to see that all was in order, and to have good fires kept up in all the rooms as the house had been so long uninhabited, and as the season was yet so early and unsettled. The whole neighbourhood was in a daily state of expectation and excitement, and every carriage that was seen approaching brought all the villagers to the doors, and it was carefully watched to see whether it took the way to Barhead.

In the midst of this, one afternoon, Marcus Welstead rode into his courtyard, accompanied by a pale, rather weakly-looking young man. They both alighted at the stable door, and a groom took their horses. Mrs. Welstead, who was the only one of her family in the house, saw them from a window in her china closet, which looked into the courtyard, alight, and wondered who her husband had got with him. That surely was not one of the Borringdons? No! He rode a splendid creature of a horse, it was true, but then a son of Sir Thomas Borringdon's would not come without his servant. Besides, no immediate news had been heard of their coming. Mr. Welstead did not either seem at all in a hurry to bring in the young man and introduce him, as he certainly would were it one of their expected neighbours. On the contrary, he began immediately to point out to the stranger the size and

capacity of his courtyard. He pointed to the ample coach-house; the range of stables; the dove-cote, and then went up to a number of setters that were chained to kennels at the side of the court opposite to the stables. These handsome creatures, on the approach of Mr. Welstead and the stranger, had all come out of their kennels, and set up a loud barking and whining; and Marcus was speedily engaged in pointing out their beauties, and relating their merits and pedigrees. He next directed the attention of his young friend to his house, and as my readers have not yet heard what sort of a house our friend Marcus's was, they may learn that at the same time with this youth, who on lifting his eyes languidly, saw a large square brick house, apparently of some centuries' standing, which was partly covered with huge masses of ivy, was surmounted by a parapet that hid the roof, and well quoined at the corners with hewn stone. The courtyard, which was very ample, was built in a corresponding style. But Marcus soon took the young gentleman through a door into an adjoining paddock, which obliged Mrs. Welstead to evacuate her china closet, and betake herself to her sitting-room, whence this paddock lay in view. Here she saw her husband directing the attention of his companion to a very large oak. He had, in fact, announced it to be the largest

oak in the kingdom, but to this the young man did not assent. He observed that he had not seen much, it was true, of the kingdom, but that in the forest of Needwood several oaks had been shown him that appeared to him much larger. This was an unfortunate observation, if, as he really appeared, the young man were weakly, and would be glad to get into the house, and into an easy chair; for this oak was the pride of Marcus Welstead, and one of his hugest hobbies. That it was the largest oak in the kingdom he had firmly settled in his own mind, and on a hundred different occasions stood champion for it against various detractors, both in conversation and the county papers. He set himself, therefore, to do the same with his present listener, and went into various comparative admeasurements of boll, compass of heads, and bulk and length of individual limbs.

"There! now he'll keep him two hours at least, if they've got into dispute about the oak," said Mrs. Welstead, from her window. "Will he *never* bring the poor young man in? He looks ready to drop, poor thing! Who can he be?"

From the tree, however, they moved, but it was only into the garden, and into that outer part of it called the shrubbery. Mrs. Welstead saw with chagrin that, instead of turning towards the house, her husband turned away from it, and disappeared

amidst the laurels and bays. The stranger was indeed conducted by Marcus through such a shrubbery as he had never seen before. Had he been disposed to call in question Mr. Welstead's assurances that there was no other such shrubbery in England, it was quite out of his power. The laurels and other evergreens, hollies, bays, arbutuses, laurustinuses, cypresses, &c. which had been planted there when the house was built, were grown to a most monstrous size. Most of them, especially the laurels, spread their boughs to the ground, and so rich was the soil, that they stood more like huge pyramids than anything else. Far and wide they spread their green, luxuriant branches, and lifted their tapering summits on high to an amazing altitude. Between these were wild grassy lawns, and the most completely secluded hiding-places, completely walled in by their verdurous, dark, glossy leaves. From their interiors rushed forth as they passed, black-birds and thrushes, which had their nests there in multitudes ; and in the grass, which bore no traces of a scythe, stood dying tufts of snow-drops with leaves now large and sedgy, and still larger tufts of daffodils in full flower, while primroses peeped forth between the ground-hiding bushes in fragrant masses.

"Why it is quite wild," said the young stran-

ger. "I wonder, Mr. Welstead, you don't have these bushes cut down, and young ones planted. It is not a garden; it is a wilderness! Bless me, how overgrown everything is!"

"My dear young friend," said Marcus, "do you really think so? Did you ever see such noble evergreens as these? Can you really prefer the little, snubby bushes that are generally seen in pleasure grounds? Why, my dear friend, they are dwarfs, and these are giants. These are admitted by men of taste to be beauties, the greatest beauties. They are so large, so flourishing, so graceful, so untrimmed, and in every way so full of that perfection that time and age only can bestow. I do admire that you don't see that."

"Well, for a wilderness," said his listener with a very wearied and languid air, and with a glance which seemed to seek the house—"for a wilderness they are very fine indeed, but for a garden, they are rather too wild for my taste."

Had the stranger been here in the autumn, instead of the spring, he would have seen these grassy lawns piled with heaps of apples and pears, ready for selling to the neighbours; and many another sight that would have been quite in keeping with the untrimmed air of the evergreens; but now Mrs. Welstead, who had shifted her position to the third side of the house, and

was gazing from the drawing-room window, caught a glimpse of the two gentlemen emerging from the forest of evergreens, and flattered herself that they came strait towards the front door. The young man certainly directed his steps towards it with a very tolerable activity, and a look of "Thank heaven! I see port at last." But Mr. Welstead, whose feet seemed drawn by some sort of underground magnetism to the right, suddenly touched the youth on the arm with his riding-whip, and with some hasty observation, pointed down the garden. In that direction stood a summer-house of the same style as the house, except that it had a steep, tiled roof, surmounted by a golden ball and weathercock. A flight of broad stone steps ascended to it, and on each side, in front of the steps, stood on pedestals, two figures of a man and a woman in old-fashioned costume, and in highly painted colours. In this summer-house, which had immensely tall windows and doors, Marcus had some curious prints and various curiosities, upon which he prided himself. There were some very unique squab Mandarins; bull-frogs with gaping mouths, which stood in rich china saucers on swivels, so that on the least motion in the room, they were all in motion too. But above all, he had a variety of artificial noses, which a queer old uncle of his used to carry in

his coat-pocket when travelling, and put on to astonish the people as he rode through town or village. One was very long and pointed, another all humps and bumps, a third was in the shape of a frog, and a fourth of a cucumber. These, with the anecdotes of their effects, as the old humorist had on various occasions sported them, and the display of his smoking apparatus, were at any time a good hour's exhibition.

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Welstead, as her husband called the young stranger that way,—“now it's all over! The poor young man looks ready to faint, and if Marcus take him into the summer-house, he will certainly get his death of cold. It's a perfect well at this time of the year; but Marcus has no feeling of cold. I must stop him—I must, indeed!”

She hurried on her bonnet and shawl, and went hastily down the garden to the summer-house, where she found her husband just in the act of relating, with fits of laughter, the consternation of some party of ladies in some inn, into which his uncle walked with his frog-nose on.

“Mr. Welstead, you will get your death here,” said Mrs. Welstead, coming hastily in, and casting an inquiring glance at the young man, who was seated in a great arm-chair listening in

patience. "You certainly will take a dreadful cold, and this young gentleman, too."

"O, my dear!" said her husband, "nothing of the kind; I was just showing my young friend here a little round. It is the first time that we have had the honour of his company, but I trust it will not be the last by many a one. This is our young friend, Mr. David Borringdon, my dear. Mr. Borringdon, this is my better half."

The Borringdons then were come! Mrs. Welstead dropped the profoundest courtesy, and made the politest inquiries after the whole family of Sir Thomas Borringdon. Hoped they were quite well after the fatigue of so long a journey, into so rough a country. Hoped they liked the neighbourhood—hoped they should be soon all very good friends, &c. Before Mrs. Welstead had, however, got through half these congratulatory expressions, Mr. Borringdon had risen from the chair, and in a very unceremonious manner offered her his hand, and said, "O, yes, they were all very well up at the new house. They would soon get over their tiredness, and he hoped Mrs. Welstead would go up and see them."

Mrs. Welstead dropped another deep courtesy, and would be most happy. She looked with wonder at the young man. What simplicity!

what nature! Well, if all the family were like him, how the great, fine folks would be taken in who expected such mighty-proud fine people!

She hardly knew what to think. Was he right sharp? Was this the effect of modern high-breeding? Such contempt of forms; such simple, childlike—she almost called it—expression and tone of voice!

But the nose exhibition was interrupted. Mr. David Borringdon *did* think it rather damp and cold there, and so they all speedily adjourned to the house. Here the guest seated himself at once in an easy chair, and said how tired he was. Mr. Welstead explained that he had just reached the door of Barhead House as the family carriage drove up, and had had the felicity to be the first to welcome them to their new home.

“What a gentlemanly man is Sir Thomas Borringdon! What a very fine, ladylike person is Lady Borringdon, and what uncommonly handsome girls are your sisters! By Jove! they will turn all the young fellows’ heads in the country.”

“I’m very glad you like them,” said Mr. Borringdon. “I am very proud of my sisters, Mr. Welstead, and so will you be when you know them better. They’ll be very fond of you, Mrs. Welstead, I can see at once. They are very handsome, and they have been horribly flattered,

I can tell you ; but they've a deal of good sense, and know what's what."

In half an hour Mr. Borringdon had told them all about his journey. He had set off a week ago alone. He was to come and see the house warmed. "But you have seen well to that, Mr. Welstead, and it's all very well, for I only got here last night, and was so tired that I went to bed directly, and never saw the house till this morning. I staid to look at some of the scenery, and some of the most curious things in the towns. I am very fond of travelling !"

Presently there came in the three sons from their mill-building. David Borringdon shook hands with them as simply and cordially as he had done with their mother. He sate and listened in stillness for some time to the conversation, which was what their father had to tell them about the arrival of Sir Thomas and the family, and then said, "Well, you don't know how glad I am to find you our neighbours."

"Why you don't know us yet," said George ; "we may turn out to be very bad neighbours."

"No, that you won't. I know better than that. I know you well enough already. I always tell in a moment whether I shall like people, and I shall like you uncommonly, I am sure of that. I shall often run down to see you, and you must

often come to see me. You will, won't you? I hate all ceremony, and I hate fine folks, and I see you are not fine folks. My father and mother gave me a lot of letters when I went to the continent last summer, to all sorts of great folks; but I never delivered them. I never go amongst the big-wigs, if I can help it. I always found some nice, good people, and I went along with them as far as I could. Oh! it's worth anything that I've such nice people as you so near."

The young men stared a little. Mrs. Welstead said again to herself, is he right sharp? But Marcus rose up, and taking the young man's hand between his, "Yes, my dear young friend," he said, with a most fatherly solemnity, "you are quite right. Here you will find the fastest friends. I am sure it will always gladden my heart to see you. I am sure my boys will be proud and happy to cultivate your friendship, and entertain you all they can. I am thankful, too, that you have such companions. I see that you know us, as if we were old acquaintances, and I feel that I know you, my dear young friend, and shall love you as a son."

There was a tear in Marcus Welstead's eye, as he said this, and the whole family wondered more and more. "Is *he* gone a little bit crazed, too?" thought Mrs. Welstead.

Mr. Borringdon rose to go. It was getting towards dinner-time, he said. He shook hands with them, and Charles and Philip went out to see him to his horse. As they went out, he turned and said to Charles, "What a nice old gentleman is your father! I quite love him as if he were my father."

The youths smiled, but said they were proud to think so; and David Borringdon mounted and rode off.

"Is this, then, one of the fine, much-talked-of Borringdons?" said Charles, as he hastily turned into the house again, and found the family just sitting down to the dinner-table. "Why, he might be just crept out of his cradle, and never have seen the world at all."

"Well, he really does seem very simple," said Mrs. Welstead.

"Simple!" said George, "he's a great flat,—that's what he is; and if the rest be like him, a sweet set of neighbours we shall have."

"He is no flat," answered the father, with emphasis. "He is a good, simple-hearted young man, that dislikes grandeur, and likes only what is quiet, unostentatious, and friendly. His family, I can tell you, are very different. More aristocratic or *au fait* people I have not set eyes on. But this boy is of a peculiar class; I have seen

such before, and I see exactly what Mr. David is."

"Yes, I think we all see that," said George. "He has got plenty of money, and is the very goose for the knowing ones to pluck; and he will get plucked, too, or I am mistaken."

"Then it is my opinion, George," replied his father, "that you *are* mistaken, and very much mistaken. I do not believe that the most knowing one in Yorkshire could dupe this lad now. I believe that it is as impossible for the artful and base to win the confidence of this simple youth, as it is impossible for him not to open his heart to those who are honest, and that are meant by God and nature to be his friends."

"Well, my dear Marcus," said Mrs. Welstead, "I see you are already meaning to be one of his friends; so we may set you down to be one of the good and honest. But we know that you have a regular *penchant* for poor creatures. Poor creatures you must have about you. There's Jacob Scantlebury and half a dozen other things, man and beast, that your heart seems to cling to, because they are regular poor creatures; and really this young man does seem well calculated to be added to your list, nay, to be put at the head of it."

"Well, you are right there, my dear. I do ex-

pect that Mr. David Borrington will stand right in my good opinion,—I may say my affections; and let me add, in yours too, my dear. He is one of those, if I do not err, that are too good for this world, and therefore do not stay long in it. He does not seem to me to have stamina in his constitution for long wear and tear of this life, but he has a heart, which it is the gift and the pre-eminent privilege of these chosen ones, that not all the powers of this, or the lower world can corrupt. They cannot do it, because they cannot attract him; they have no charms by which they can allure him. He estimates things by a wholly different standard. He has a different nature, and therefore an inborn aversion to them. He feels their proximity as pure steel feels that of the opposite pole of the magnet, and turns from them. His spirit is as pure as that of a child. *You* might impose on him in some degree, if you were so inclined, because you are not radically bad; and because he clings to you, as he does to the few whom he meets, in whose nature the spirit of goodness has maintained itself against the world. *You* might impose on him for experiment's sake; but the most polished scoundrel could not. And now mark what I say. In this neighbourhood there will not be wanting wealthy and fashionable rascals, who will make zealous court to the family,

and they may impose on other members of it; but if they impose on Mr. David, if they win at all upon him, and are not at once and steadily shunned by him, I will concede that I know nothing of human nature."

Such was the conversation which occupied this evening. Time will show who was right.

CHAPTER V.

FURTHER ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE BORRINGDONS.

It was Easter, and some of the first families of the neighbourhood were down for a few days in the country. The number of persons in handsome carriages that were driving towards Barhead House to give a greeting call on the Borringdons, was unusual for the season of the year. All that had any claims to rank in the neighbourhood, and were not in town, were of this number, and all professed to be quite charmed with the new-comers. In a magnificent silver basket, in the drawing-room, were to be seen the cards of some of their wealthy and titled neighbours. There were those of the Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, the Earl of Scarborough, Lord Abbeylands, Lord Thumbtenant, Sir Thomas Harefield, and Baron Newstamp, the great lawyer. Of squires and dames the heap of

cards was prodigious. From the celebrated Lady Masterfull, who raised cowsheds and thereby laughed at the Reform Bill, still sitting as representative of her own borough in parliament, by her proxy, Wheeler Weathercock, Esq., to the little, dry widow of Lowstone, a village some five miles off, who came at once to recommend herself and her schools of industry. The Welsteads had not only made their call, but had been invited to dine with the family; and had returned as much charmed as everybody else. What were the impressions they had received, and what they had learned, stood thus.

Sir Thomas Borringdon was a somewhat tall and slender old man, of upwards of seventy; he had the quiet and somewhat cold manners, that are generally considered so very gentlemanly. He had a delicate, cold hand, and gave a very cold shake with it on presentation. There was a formal politeness about him, that was the very antipodes of the manner of his son, David. He seemed to be very much at his ease, but had not that cordial manner that put others at their ease with him. In a word, he would have been said by almost every beholder, to have much pride and aristocratic, though unobtrusive, *hauteur*. He left his guests to talk to him, rather than address himself to them; and assented or dissented, in that

cool and quiet tone, that seemed to tell of great experience of the world, and a temperament beyond all contagion from its warmth, or surprise from its novelties.

He had a thin face, somewhat prominent and well-defined features, which in youth must have been handsome, and were now to be pronounced very gentlemanly. In contrast with the jolly, full form, ruddy and round face of Marcus Welstead, all alive with interest and expression, Sir Thomas shewed ghostlike and unimpassioned. Marcus sat and talked, as it seemed in comparison with the few, low, short replies of Sir Thomas, in a constant, energetic, and somewhat loud manner. It was evident, however, that Sir Thomas listened, though with a cold exterior, yet with deep interest, to the conversation of Marcus; for it was to him rich in information of the country, its localities, its families, their possessions, their interests in the county or neighbourhood, their pedigrees and origins. From this it only diverged to the natural history, agriculture, and statistics of the vicinity. The value of lands, the experiments that might be made, the mines of coal and ironstone, the woods and game, and a boundless mass of matters which, with a new proprietor, are the choicest topics, and on which Marcus was most eloquent. The politics of the county and

their circumstances, were by no means forgotten ; for no one was so deeply interested in them, or well-informed upon them, as he.

Sir Thomas, having spent the greater part of his life in India, where he had filled in succession a variety of civil offices, greatly to his credit and emolument, was, in a word, very ignorant of English affairs. He had, however, a strong leaning in his nature, or rather his habit, which had been the growth of his life, to conservatism, and listened to Marcus's observations on politics with a silence and fixity of feature that betrayed no kind of feeling whatever. He was of a high, aristocratic temperament, and inquired particularly of the standing and general estimation of his landed neighbours.

Lady Borringdon was a Frenchwoman. She was much younger than Sir Thomas, and was his second wife, whom he had married at Pondicherry, a few years before quitting India. His children were those of his first wife. Lady Borringdon was somewhere about fifty, of a tall and commanding figure and presence. In her style of person, she must have been eminently handsome ; and for her years, was so still. A clear, brown complexion, dark, quick eyes, features that expressed much spirit, and could beam with peculiar grace, made her a striking personage. She

was fond of her rank and wealth, fond of pleasure and state, and gave the most tasteful and costly entertainments.

The daughters were two. The elder was about twenty, two years younger than David, her brother. The second about eighteen. These young ladies shewed conspicuously that they owed no parentage to Lady Borringdon. They were of a much fairer complexion, though both possessed the richest dark hair and eyebrows. The elder, Clara, was something above the middle height, beautiful in form and face. She had something of the stamp of Sir Thomas's features. A lovely mouth, a finely-shaped nose, dark eyes, and a fine soft tint of colour, that seemed at times to fade away into paleness; but with a blush, or a warm rush of feeling of any kind, came glowing and mantling over her cheeks in the richest beauty. She seemed to possess a good deal of her father's taciturn manner, but a little conversation would call her out into great interest and sympathy in the subject of discourse; and in the circle of intimate friends she became often as buoyant and playful as the merriest of them. At all times her expression was singularly sweet and amiable, and her voice possessed that soft and feeling tone that thrills the heart of youth with a peculiar fascination.

Frederica, the younger, was a very different

person. She had a certain resemblance to David, which evidently was derived from their mother. Her features were not so fine and delicately chiselled as those of her sister. There was more of roundness in the sweep of her chin, in the termination of the nose ; more of the fulness, freshness, and hue of strong health in her complexion. Unlike the thinness and pale langour of her brother's, her countenance glowed with the brightest colour, and rich freshness of the skin. Her eyes were large and soulful, but they were also full of a merry light, and smiles and laughter shewed a set of the most pearly and beautifully-formed teeth imaginable. There was no trait of deep thought about the brow, as on that of her sister. She seemed all life and joyous happiness. In everything she found food for amusement and joke, and was a little prone to the satirical. In fact, Frederica was formed to captivate the gay, and Clara the sentimental and poetical. They had never been out of England since they were mere children ; they had been educated in London by their aunt, Sir Thomas's sister, and had only joined their own family on its coming home from India. For them the country was a new world, and everything afforded them a subject of the most interesting inquiry. It was their delight to ride on horseback through the deep lanes and over the open moor-

lands ; to traverse on foot the fields and wolds around the house, and to make themselves not only acquainted with flower and bird, and the beauty of general nature, but with the mines and machines that stood here and there, to them most singular objects. In these walks they often encountered the peasantry, and entered into conversation with them, wonderfully amused, especially the merry Frederica, with their homely dialect and simple notions. "Two wonderful handsome and free young ladies," they were therefore soon reported through the neighbourhood, and their anecdotes of the village people, in the evening circles, where they shone in all their beauty and accomplishments, were very amusing.

David Borringdon had gone to England from India, like his sisters, to be educated, but had returned thither at the age of fourteen. He had early entered into the army, and the climate on his growing frame had been most injurious. His younger brother, however, the youngest of Sir Thomas's children, who had gone to England with the two daughters, was on the point of rejoining his parents and himself in India, and David, who had parted with him as a little boy of about seven years of age, looked with intense expectation for his arrival. He had had a particular affection for his brother as a child, though he was much

younger, and the thought of now finding him a glad companion of fifteen, was to him inexpressibly delightful. David seemed to live in the daily anticipation of his brother's return, but the ship which should have brought him came in, and the beloved brother was not there—he had died of a fever on the voyage, and found his grave in the ocean.

The stroke was severe to Sir Thomas, but to David it was nearly a death-blow. He fainted on receiving the news, and mind and body, already weakened, seemed at once to become bereft of all power and will. The physicians doubted whether he would not sink into perfect idiotcy. Nothing, they said, but the homeward voyage and European air could save him, or restore the tone of his intellect. Sir Thomas took leave of India, and returned home.

The effect of the voyage was to a certain degree auspicious. David gradually regained a portion of vigour, and began to take some interest in what went on around him ; but his mind was that of a simple child. He was as unlike the active, eager, speculative, and sanguine young men who were at the same time on board, as a ghost is to a living man. He was like some overgrown boy.

As he drew near England, the thoughts of the two sisters whom he had left as playful children

came with more and more interest over him. His heart turned now to them as the objects of affection and comfort. He grew impatient to reach them. He promised himself intense delight in their society. With them, and the air of England, he felt assured that he should soon be strong, and active, and happy. The ship entered the East India Docks, and in a few hours they were driven to the house of Sir Thomas's sister, where his own sisters were. It was late in the evening, and the aunt was giving a party. The house was full of guests and lights, and when the two sisters appeared to receive and embrace their parents and brother, David stood awe-stricken and abashed before them. Instead of those little romping girls that had so lived in his imagination, he now saw two young ladies of extraordinary beauty, and in all the brightness of their festive array. As he afterwards said, he felt ashamed and humbled before them; the consciousness of his feeble and morbid condition, and the contrast between them and him, filled his whole being. How beautiful, how graceful, how full of accomplishment and knowledge of society, were they—how simple, ignorant, unfitted for life and its joys was he! He wished himself in the Gulf of Persia, sleeping with his lost brother. The sisters, who were shocked at the apparition of their brother, when

they had expected in him a gay and handsome youth, and yet restrained, by their strangeness—for they were now strangers to each other—from expressing their sorrow and sympathy, were obliged soon to return to their company, where David saw them afterwards for a few minutes, dancing, laughing, and conversing in high animation with handsome and fashionable men; and it seemed to him that they were no longer companions for him. They appeared cold-hearted creatures of fashion, who would despise him. There was, he thought, no longer any brother or sister left to him. He was alone, and must be alone. He felt the bitter sickness of such a wretchedness, and withdrew to bed.

Time convinced him that he had formed too severe a judgment of his sisters. As they were more and more together, and he could open his heart to them, he regained, as it were, more and more of his old playfellows. He found in them, under the dazzling exterior of beauty and a brilliant education, the old hearts unwarped, the old feelings still alive, the old memories cherished; the tears which they shed together over their lost brother, washed away every lingering trace of strangeness; and thereafter David's heart clung to his sisters with a strong and strengthening affection that made him careless of the neglect of all

the world besides. As the summer advanced, his father sent him, by the desire of the physician, on a tour on the Continent, and he had come back with much renewed vigour, but with a sensitive, retiring disposition that made him shun the general run of people, but cling as with a double hold to the few that took his fancy. Of his sisters he was grown extremely proud. It was his delight to ride and walk with them ; to read to them, and to see them on occasions of festivity winning admiration and diffusing pleasure, while he sate quietly in a nook, and nodded to their affectionate and recognising smiles.

CHAPTER VI.

ENTENTE CORDIALE.

SUCH were, or appeared, the family of Sir Thomas Borringdon at the period of their arrival, and of the first acquaintance of Marcus Welstead with them.

David soon made good his word of being very friendly. He came down almost every day. He very soon went with the young men to their mill, which was in active progress now, and began to take quite an active interest in it. It would have been the same with anything else that they had been occupied with. He threw himself, in fact, entirely on them for companionship. He found that he could be quite at home with them, as he had been with the younger officers of the mess in India. There required no ceremony, no disguise, with them. They were, to use his own words,

just after his own heart. They talked of fishing and shooting together as the seasons came round ; and they rode with him occasionally through the woods, or over the moors, and told him all about the country, and who and what were the people whose houses they passed.

“ By jingo !” exclaimed he often, “ what a lucky thing it is that I’ve found you here ! Well, I shall always stay here. I sha’n’t go to London in the spring. What’s London to me ? This is just what I like—all in this nice country with you. I don’t want anything else. And in the summer !—O that’s capital ! I shall get rid of a lot of bores that are down here just now. There’s old Lord Abbeyland’s son, young Legge, or Long-Legge as he should be called,—he’s a great bore to me. He comes it too thick. Hang him, I think he’s an eye on Clara, but he sha’n’t have her,—no, nor any such smirking, mincing, lipping jackanapes. And there’s young Townley, or Townlands, or whatever it is, and half-a-dozen more, say I must dine with ’em, and ride with ’em, and heaven knows what ; but I’ve got off, do you know, pretty well yet, on pretence that I’m not very well,—and I’m not quite so well as I should like to be. But with you I shall get stronger every day, I know, and I shouldn’t if I went and drank their wine, and galloped over

hedges with them. I should soon break my neck. But, Lord bless me! what's to be done with those two fellows, Jack Danvers and Dick Mellor? They are *always* here, they say. They *never* go to town. I'm somewhat glad to hear t'other young sprigs talk of town, and fine girls, and operas, and Newmarket, and Lord knows what stuff, for then I shall be rid of 'em: but these fellows! O goodness! what's to be done? That Dick Mellor is, for the life of him, a horse-jockey, and Jack Danvers is a horse."

"Oh, that Danvers has a constitution like a castle. He rides like a steam-engine, drinks after dinner like a fish, and his talk is all of horseflesh, and foxes, and wonders that he's done in hunting and catching poachers. The other day he leapt out of a coppice as I was riding up a hollow sandy road below. Out he comes full leap on his horse, and when I thought he was going to break his neck down the loose gravelly bank, down he comes on his horse as if it were not a horse, but a cat, right into the road by me, and was going to lay hold of my hand with a loud 'Well, Mr. Borringdon, how d'ye do?' But my horse wasn't used to see such fellows dropping out of the clouds, and went off like lightning, and if the centaur himself had not come like lightning after me, would soon have shaken

me out of my seat down the next hill, and tossed me to old David. But up he comes, with a 'D—m it, your horse is very scaddle, Borrington,' lays hold of the bridle, and stops her as if she were a rocking-horse. They tell me he once lifted his own horse out of a bog, by putting a gate under it, and bearing the horse out on his back. He said the other day that he once laid a wager, when he was a captain in the yeoman cavalry, that he would jump into a dozen sugar hogsheads, set of a row in Doncaster market-place, and out of one into the other, almost without stopping to take breath, and that he did it. Why, he's not a man, he's a tiger. He cracked to me the other day of having attacked nine poachers himself at once, and bound them, and conducted them to the round-house till morning. But the most amusing thing of all is what he has just related."

" 'As I rode along the meadows,' said he, 'what should I see but a fellow fishing in the Bobble (the stream). Dash his impudence, thought I, why who can the fellow be that dare be fishing there? So up I galloped towards him, and bawled out, 'What do you there, fellow?' 'I'm fishing,' said he, very coolly. 'Fishing! and what the devil are you fishing for?' 'For pancheons,'* says

* A large kind of pot which the countrywomen often use for a wash-tub

he as coolly. ‘For pancheons? and what do you bait with then?’ ‘With porringers,’* says he, just as coolly, lifting his line out of the water, and bringing up at the end of it, almost into my face, an actual porringer. ‘Cursed fool!’ said I, and rode off, for I was fit to burst with laughter. I saw plainly enough the fellow’s ready wit. He had seen me coming, hidden his fish, if he had caught any, thrown his baits out of the porringer, and hung the pot on the hook.”

“But what,” asked David, after the laughter which the incident also occasioned in his hearers, “what is to be done with such a great Durham Ox as this Danvers? He has sent me a couple of pointers,—handsome dogs they are, but I’d rather not have had them, only one must be civil to one’s neighbours. I think he’s an eye on Clara too, hang him! And the fellow’s very handsome; I wonder what such fellows are made so handsome for? And when he talks to the ladies, it’s amazing how very smooth, and insinuating, and sentimental he can be—the bore!”

“Sentimental! Jack Danvers sentimental!” said Mrs. Westead.

“Yes, ma’am,” said David, “he talks to them about poetry—really he does! And about straw-thatched cottages, and romantic scenery, and old

* A pot of coarse earthenware, with a handle.

churches, and all that sort of thing ; and the villagers and their little histories ; you'd think the man was positively poetical. I heard him asking Frederica the other evening, ' Why the daisy is so fond of growing in village churchyards ? ' And Frederica laughed and said, ' Oh ! she supposed because Mr. Danvers went galloping all over the country so with his fox-hunters, that it was afraid for its life—anywhere else but in the churchyard.' ' That's clever ! ' said he, laughing, too, ' deuced clever ; but that's not it. It's because it's the first flower that the village children gather and love, and when they die it goes and grows on their graves, because it loves them.' I wonder where he got that from now ? perhaps he's seen it in a book somewhere, or heard some young clergyman say it ;—it's not his own, you're sure."

" O the wretch !" said Mrs. Welstead ; " and he can talk in that way, can he ? A man that has no more feeling for the poor when they cross his brutal pursuits, than he has for a stone. It was but last winter that he was riding over the wheat of poor farmer Wagstaffe, with a hundred horsemen almost, and when the poor man ran out bare-headed,—ran out with his thin white hair flying in the wind, and begged him, in Heaven's name, not thus to trample all his future crop to atoms, that he shook his whip over the poor old

man's head, and swore in dreadful terms that he would cut him into a thousand pieces if *he were not a magistrate!* A magistrate, indeed! Such a man to be a magistrate! And he really can talk thus to your sister?" said Mrs. Welstead, musingly.

"He really does, the grampus," said David.

Such was the simplicity of David's conversation as he sate of an evening at the Welsteads, where he often staid without any ceremony and dined, or as he was with the young men at the mill, where he would be as busy as any of them, boring, and hammering, and doing anything that did not require much strength. For old Mr. Welstead he had much respect; and Mrs. Welstead began immediately to forget David's great simplicity, and to take a great interest in him. As he felt this, he soon opened his heart to her, and told her all his thoughts and feelings and history, which so touched the good heart of Mrs. Welstead, that she came to quite a motherly affection for him. This had a wonderful effect on David. He confided all his troubles and forebodings to her, for he often thought that he should not live long; hung on her words as on those of a mother, and had the most profound respect for her advice. Of the young men he took the most to Charles and Philip. George seemed too grave and formal

for him, never seemed to sympathise with him, though he was always civil to him, if it could be called civil always to address David with apparent respect for his rank and wealth, but often to forget that David was speaking to him, and sometimes gave him a sort of half answer, as it were at random, and while his thoughts were otherwise occupied. Philip and he agreed exceedingly well. They often rode, and played at billiards, as Philip did not so much occupy himself with the mill-building; but Charles was the prime favourite. There was something in Charles's cordial, though grave manner, that amazingly attracted David Borringdon. Charles always took a warm interest in David; seemed always glad to have him with him; and David, simple as he seemed, soon saw and felt that Charles had a mind far superior to any other of the persons he had found down here. It was strong, clear, commanding, and well stored with knowledge. Without any claims to poetry or high imagination, there was deep feeling in it; a quick and strong taste for what was noble, beautiful, and good; and force and self-dependence that were like a rock for David's weakness to lean against. He found, too, that Charles and his mother ever thought extremely alike, and that there was a particular bond of taste, feelings, and views between them.

David Borringdon seemed to be admitted by mother and son to this close and pleasant fellowship; and he felt inconceivably happy in the enjoyment of it. Charles had, in fact, soon brought his mother to perceive and acknowledge the pure, and right-feeling, and incorruptible heart which was the foundation of David's simplicity; and his mother had again committed David especially to Charles's charge. "He looks to you, Charles," said she, "as to an elder brother. You must be kind to him. You will have no trouble to guide him, for he will do whatever you please that is right, and you will not want him to do anything else. You may be everything to him, and you may depend upon it, that in some way you will be rewarded for it."

Thus this intimacy grew. In the mean time, Marcus Welstead was as closely engaged with Sir Thomas himself. He was looking through title-deeds and leases, and discussing the best measures for this and that farm and property: but, above all, he was actively engaged in getting the coal mines to work again. Under his superintendence the machinery was repaired or renewed. Men once more swarmed over the coal-fields, and there was a life and noise of machinery, and smokes by day and flames by night told of abundant labour and prosperity to the neighbourhood.

In short, Marcus was become Sir Thomas's grand counsellor and steward without salary. So deeply was he engaged in this new business of friendship, that politics were almost forgotten ; and the justice-room would have lost much of its interest too, had not Sir Thomas now sate by the side of Marcus in it, and taken just this part in the business—to listen to Marcus's more experienced conclusions, and sanction them.

It would have been wonderful if, under all these circumstances, the young people had not been making as rapid strides towards a nearer acquaintanceship. David was like one of the family down at Scartland, and was not easy till Mrs. Welstead knew his sisters, and his sisters knew her. Then the young men must go and see him, and Charles and Philip were not long before they were frequent visitors up at Barhead ; George was more distant, and seemed more occupied with his mill and the farm, but Charles and Philip were not only more and more willing to visit Barhead, but somehow, by the luckiest accidents, they were continually falling in, either in their walks or rides, with David and his sisters. David, with his pure artlessness and open-heartedness, was talking continually to his sisters of his friends Charles Welstead, and of the good-natured Philip, and of all that they said and did,

and shewed him ; and then he was as sure to come and say, " O, Charles, you must shew my sisters the place you shewed me yesterday. They do so want to see it ; and the weather is now so beautiful, and the country is so charming, it will be delicious to ride thither."

The consequence was, that this cavalcade of young people was pretty often to be seen in different parts of the neighbourhood. Now they were exploring the ruins of Coningsborough Castle, now those of an old abbey in a deep and secluded valley. Now they were galloping along the ridges of the moorlands, and halting in a group, worthy of a splendid painter, to gaze from the brow of one of the brown hills over the country stretching far away below. The noble steeds, full of life and spirit, the young men, equally noble in their nobler kind, all activity and youthful grace, if we except poor David's more thin and somewhat stooping figure and pale features, and the two maidens with the fresh roses of health and the fresh moorland air on their cheeks, and the light of pleasure and of the heart's joyous hope in their eyes. It was a beautiful sight, as they sate and followed with quick glances the motion of Charles's whip, which pointed out far-off objects—the winding road over the high moors towards Sheffield, or the spire of some village

church to which they had probably already extended one of their excursions.

It was not likely to escape the observation of the people, such a group as this, and the various rides in which they were met; and countrywomen and grave men would turn and say "Ay, ay, it's not mighty difficult even for old eyes to see which way things are going. It's a brave thing for the Welsteads, it is, these rich folks coming into the county. The old squire, I'll warrant, makes a pretty penny out of it by his stewarding; and bonny young ladies are these too. There'll be a brace of matches there at least, and before long, if I'm not mistaken."

There were those, too, who had seen the same group rambling on foot in the fields, and so far off down in the valley amongst the woods, and on the moorland sides, where they were very busy gathering plants and flowers. Nay, Charles Welstead had been seen actually half way up the leg in a bog on the moors, gathering some sort of wild flowers for the ladies, who were become wonderful botanists. In fact, young people, and handsome people too, had met in one of those peculiar periods that do sometimes fall out in the days of youth, and which cannot be enjoyed but at the price of a whole life's fortunes. The country was beautiful, and the season was the enchanting one

of spring. Day after day, wood and field, and hill, and every object of nature put on a fairer and more delicious aspect. The heart of youth, like the flower under the earth, needs but a small portion of the sunbeams of this season to leap forth and glow in poetic rapture at the elysium in which it finds itself. The tint on the green bough, the water leaping beneath it, the odours of new-born blossoms, that again dying in beauty on the pathway, sprinkle it as with snow ; the bright, glittering pageantry of morning, and the soft sounds and falling shadows of evening—all have but one voice, and awake but one feeling, that of the sweetness of life and of affection.

These young people had come thus wondrously together into this enchanted land of youth and spring, and without a word of explanation, or a design, they were moulded by it into one tone and spirit. Earth seemed to have soared up into the region of heaven, and to perpetuate that heaven asked but one thing—but in that everything—to live and die together.

Charles saw in Clara a form of that beauty, and found in her a depth and beauty of that sentiment which were as certain to sink deep into his sensitive and grave spirit as the life itself; and Clara found in the manly form and spirit of Charles all that she was formed to love and lean upon; while Philip

and Frederica seemed to have laughed and joked themselves into a companionship almost as close.

As they rode along in some of their country rides, you might have seen in the still and deep conversation of Charles and Clara some evidence of a union of thought and heart that could not be readily broken, while the merry laughter and sportive chatter that rose behind seemed to say that Philip and Frederica were made to live and laugh together. But —

CHAPTER VII.

A CLOUD.

BUT such dreams are fragile as they are fair. The dream of youth must break, or it were no dream, but an immortality. We have ourselves awoke from it, and are now advanced more than three years in the path of our story. Yes, great and important have been the changes, since we, as but a moment ago, presented you with youth and beauty, amid wilds and wild-flowers, and a rapidly springing growth of hopes and fancies, each as beautiful as the lilies that shade the bower of an angel in heaven. We are now to present each of those beings who dreamed only of living and loving—how and where could it be?

Charles Welstead is at this moment leaning, in deep study, over a large mass of papers in his chambers in London. Philip is in Oxford, where

we must, ere long, visit him. And poor David Borringdon is lying on a sofa at Barhead,—oh! far more pale and thin than we ever saw him before. Clara, sad but beautiful, sits by him and reads to him. It is the Bible which is in her hands. Frederica is not visible.

And Marcus Welstead, where is he? At Barhead beside David?—No. With Sir Thomas, in the midst of title-deeds, or talk of news and politics?—No. In the coal-field on his fine chestnut mare, surveying works, and hearing of the day's troubles or successes in the mines?—No. He sits alone in his study. He looks dejected, dispirited, damped, as it were—aged not three, but thirty more years! There is a change. It is a great one, and a sad one. What is it and whence comes it? It is in Barhead as well as in Scartland. There is silence and a feeling of misery. Yet Sir Thomas is reading his newspaper, and looks much as usual. Lady Borringdon is driving out in a very handsome carriage, and with richest liveries. She looks well, handsome; yet the stamp on her brow is that of chagrin, and of thought, deep but not welcome. Nothing seems to be going on briskly but the mill of Hodden Combe, and that already looks dirty and mealy with business. How is all this? Let us see how all this has come about.

For some time after the period terminated in the last chapter things went on as they were going on then. Marcus Welstead was as busy with Sir Thomas, and on his estate and coal-fields, as if he had a salary of a thousand a year for it; David was as constantly at the side of Charles Welstead, and Charles pretty often at the side of Clara. Those rides and walks, that beautiful country, and that beautiful summer, did their work. They were not lost on the hearts on which they fell. Happiness seemed to have alighted especially in Barhead and Scartland Manor. Charles Welstead appeared excessively happy; full of energy, and full of hope. He talked now earnestly of very soon leaving for London and his studies, but he did not so soon get away. Clara and Fr derica seemed equally happy, and made rapid progress in botany, and knowledge of the country. David appeared happier than they all. The hue of country health refused to settle on his cheek, spite of all the pure and bracing air of the moorlands, but on that pale cheek sat a quiet smile of pride and affection, that as he rode gently between them, often turned first on Charles and then on Clara. There were three hearts that perfectly understood each other, if there were not more.

But the world around soon broke into that

magical little world, where the most fairyland hopes were springing up, thick as cowslips on the green mead, and feelings delicious as dreams of heaven, were growing over the head of prudence that had fallen asleep on a bank of sunshine and luxurious violets.

At Barhead there was a grand ball. The approaches to the house were festive archings of tropical trees and coloured lamps. The house was one scene of dazzling light, and of crowds of gay people. Amid the gayest and the fairest danced the young Welsteads and the daughters of the house. Many voices, in tones most audible, broke out in acclamations of praise and admiration of those splendid young people. Many other words were muttered that we will not repeat, because they were too low. Again there was a great ball at Yoxby Lodge, the house of Jack Danvers, whose estate, of sixteen thousand a year rental, adjoined that of Barhead. All the neighbouring families at the time in the country were there. There were the Borringdons, but somehow there came not the Welsteads. Jack Danvers himself led off the ball with Lady Borringdon, who, clad in a dress of richest satin, and with a most becoming turban and feather, looked fit for the Sultana of the great Sultan himself, and heard, as she descended the saloon with her partner, no

doubt with very agreeable feelings, the epithets of wonderful fine woman! amazingly fine woman! splendid woman indeed! constantly repeated. The Honourable Longshank Legge, and the Honourable Stuart Townsend, followed with Clara and Frederica as partners. The Borringdons were the great people of the fête, and wonderfully courted and caressed. Balls and parties innumerable followed, all gay and splendid as wealth and emulation could make them. People began to ask one another, "How is it? We never see the Welsteads out at parties now. How is it that they are not here, where they always used to be?"

On one of these occasions, Lady Borringdon seemed to have been asking this question of Jack Danvers, for she was seated under the pillars of the orchestra in a fine dancing dress, and Jack Danvers, magnificently dressed in country gentleman style, and looking like the very emperor of Nimrods, a most extremely handsome animal, was leaning against one of the pillars, and answering her questions with a sort of eager mystery. David Borringdon, who sat very quietly near, wishing the time to leave were come, because there were neither of his friends, Charles nor Philip Welstead there, and because those jack-anapes, as he called them, Legge and Townsend, were flirting most assiduously with his sisters,

suddenly heard these words issuing from Jack Danvers' mouth.

"Oh, beggars! absolute beggars! The old fellow is deeper in debt than Pharaoh was in the Red Sea. Nothing can save him—pays nobody. All the county knows it. How do they carry on? Heaven only knows, but it can't hold together long. What is he going to do with his sons? Egad, that's known to himself, I reckon; what *can* a man do without the brass, eh? Look well and dress well? Ay, confound their impudence, that I fancy is their cue—good looks and good clothes, eh? Lady Borringdon, you are too much a woman of the world to need me to tell you what these things have done before now. There are good catches in this county, but parents, now-a-days, are pretty well on the look-out—on guard, as I may say. But *then* strangers may come, you know, and strangers don't learn everything at once, and young girls will take fancies sometimes and run off, and then all's over. I was going to say, have *you* a care, Lady Borringdon, for your daughters are devilish fine creatures—people talk deucedly already."

"People talk!" said Lady Borringdon, rising up; "people talk, say you?—Of what? of whom? How, Mr. Danvers?"

The rest of the queries and the reply were lost,

for her ladyship and Danvers stood now with their faces very close together, and pursued the conversation. The music struck up, and David could hear no more. He could only see that there was a fire in his mother-in-law's eye, a deep crimson glow on her cheek, and an air of indignant pride on her brow, that made him inwardly tremble, for he had quailed before it, and trembled at it before.

From this time things kept changing rapidly. The young ladies never rode out except with a servant after them, even when David was with them. They were never seen on foot in the fields. They were now often seen driving in the carriage with their mother-in-law. The young Welsteads were seldom up at Barhead, and when there, spite of the cold civility of Sir Thomas, and the eagerness of David to make them at home, they were not at home. There was an awkwardness, a constraint, a miserable feeling in and about them. Lady Borringdon was studiously cold and high, and distant. The young ladies seldom appeared, and when they did were evidently ill at ease and unhappy.

One day a very polite note came from Sir Thomas to Marcus Welstead, thanking him most sincerely for all his neighbourly kindness and exertions. It was accompanied by a fat buck,

and said that Sir Thomas could not think of longer trespassing on the valuable time of Mr. Welstead, and he had therefore, at the particular recommendation of his friend Danvers, accepted the offered services of Mr. Mellor, who was young, active, extremely well acquainted, he understood, with the management of farms and mines, and very anxious to exercise his knowledge.

Polite as was the letter, and fat as was the buck, Marcus was somehow deeply hurt. He did not well know why, or how, but he mounted his horse and rode up to Barhead to insist on Sir Thomas still allowing him to shew him the trifling mark of his neighbourly respect, of performing those little offices for him. But Sir Thomas was not very well, could not be seen; and Lady Borringdon delivered his thanks and acknowledgments in so *very* polite and graceful a way, that Marcus was strangely dumfounded, rose, made a profound bow, and withdrew.

It was some days after this before David Borringdon made his appearance at Scartland. There was a heaviness and a silence brooding extraordinarily there. Marcus was much in his room; Mrs. Welstead sate and sewed in silence, and now and then a tear trickled down upon her work, and the young men were very much out,

and in no lofty spirits when in. Charles was now actively preparing for his removal to London.

It was a still and brilliant summer afternoon as David Borringdon alighted from his horse in the courtyard of Scartland House, and, leaving it with a groom, walked up the garden to the house. The garden lay full of sunshine, and the rich scent of the numerous wall-flowers, and the murmur of multitudes of bees in the blossoms of other plants, gave a tranquil charm to the whole place. The door stood open, but all was still, as if nobody was at home. As David passed the windows of the sitting-room, which were open too, there, however, he perceived his friends sitting at tea, and a simultaneous movement and exclamation expressed the welcome of his presence. The old gentleman put his hand out of the window to shake that of David, saying very cordially, "God bless you, my dear young friend, —come in, come in, and take some tea."

A very warm welcome met David as he entered the room, from all sides. For a few minutes no one could have perceived that all was not as it had been there. David sate down and began shaking the ears of the little fat spaniel that leaped obstreperously upon him, as if he had missed him longer than usual. For a little time conversation went on with a spirit; but Marcus's

eye was fixed solemnly on David's face, and his handkerchief was drawn across his brow as if he found it too hot ; but there was a sparkling moisture in his eyes that betrayed another cause.

"My dear friend," said he, "you have not been well—you are not well now. You must go to the sea-coast, or somewhere. This place is too hot for you."

"Well, I think so," said David ; "it does not suit me, somehow. It must be too hot."

"But it is cooler at Barhead," said George, "than at most places. You mostly have a breeze there. And then it is nothing like the Indies."

"O no ! it's nothing like that ; but the Indies didn't suit me, you know. I don't know what will suit me."

Marcus sipped his tea, and said, "it really was very hot, and that he would go and smoke his pipe in the summer-house." When he was gone out, George, who was busy at his newspapers, said, "There's every prospect of a fine season : the crops are looking well, and I see the market is already getting down."

"That's very likely," said Charles.

Here George and Philip withdrew, and went out through the garden. Charles and Mrs. Westead sate alone and silent with David. There was a long pause, when at length David, looking

at Mrs. Welstead, said, in a low and faltering voice—

“ Things have gone on very strangely lately, Mrs. Welstead. They’ll kill me if they go on this way. It’s not the weather, you know better than that,—we all know better than that,—it’s the way that things are going on. Charles, you are going to London. I know all about it. I have been to old Jacob. Well, I shall go to London too. I shan’t stay here ; I shall go to my aunt’s, and then I shall see you as I have done. When do you go ? I shall go with you.”

“ I cannot tell to a day, David ; but you must not go with me. You must not think of it.”

“ No, dear David, you really must not think of that,” added Mrs. Welstead, shaking his hand, and pressing it kindly. “ That may not be agreeable to your father. It may do harm, and besides I shall want you when Charles is gone to come and comfort me.”

“ No, I can’t stay here ; I’m not wanted here. I can be of no use ; and it wears me out. If I did stay, you know that I should come and see you every day. Yes, every day,—nobody should hinder me. No ! I will never turn *my* back on *my* best friends. They may kill me, but they shall not make me mean—make me miserable.”

“ But you must honour and obey your father,

David," added Mrs. Welstead, looking earnestly at him, while she still pressed his hand in her's, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. "You have a good heart, David, and you will not, you must not, let it think hardly of your father, of your—mother," added she faintly.

David Borringdon looked at her with his large blue eyes as she spoke of his father, as if he wondered that she could believe that he could entertain a hard thought of his father, but at the word mother, a singular change passed over his pale face. There was a hectic flush on it; he rose up, and evidently trembling, yet with an air that Mrs. Welstead had never seen in him before, an air of lofty and settled scorn, he said, as he paced about in agitation, and with his hand upon his heart, which seemed to beat powerfully,

"Mother! no, she is no mother of mine,—she never was. No, my mother was an angel, aye, she was indeed an angel of God, and God loved her. She was too good for this earth, and she is gone, and I wish I were gone, too. That Lady Borringdon!"—and he paused and looked almost fierce and rigid, and as pale as death—"she is no mother of me, of mine, or of anybody's. She has the heart of a stone, the pride of Lucifer, and the will of a tyrant. She will ruin us all! She will make this county a hell to us all. I do not blame

my father—Heaven forbid ! He is old, and he is feeble. That horrid climate has robbed both him and me of our strength : but Lady Borringdon—she hates me, she despises me ! I saw it in her first glance,—I see it every day ; I feel it in her voice, her manner, her very footstep. But Clara ! but Frederica !—she shall not ruin them. She shall not sell them in her low ambition. She shall not make them wretched ! No, they are too good, and too noble,—she cannot do that, and she shall not ! Charles ! there must be no misunderstandings ; there must be no nonsense. Clara understands you, and you understand Clara. You must be true, and trust in Heaven, and in time. You must not, and you shall not be parted. You promise me that, Charles ? — You promise it ? You must not let your pride make you foolish, and make Clara miserable : that's all I fear. I fear nothing else, so promise me, and I shall be—better.”

As he uttered the last word, a shiver seemed to seize him ; he turned towards the sofa, and Charles, springing up, led him to it.

“ Be quiet, David,” whispered Charles ; “ don't distress yourself,—all will be right in time.”

Mrs. Welstead hastened and brought David a glass of wine ; he drank it, and seemed better and quieter. Mrs. Welstead again begged him not to

set himself in any way against his father. To be passive and have faith.

"But they say such hard things," added David, "such false things. There are so many bad people about here; I cannot stay when Charles is gone away. I must go, too. What's the sixteen thousand a-year of that Jack Danvers to Clara? He is a brute. He was a brute to his first wife, every body says that, and she soon faded and died. And shall he have Clara, because he has so many acres? What are his acres to her? She will have acres of her own; and she cannot eat his acres, or make herself happy like an idiot, with playing with more money than she has occasion for. No, that never shall happen. But they are always coming still, he and that shadow of his, that Dick Mellor, and I shall not stay to endure them."

A long conversation ensued, in which Mrs. Welstead again pressed on David to follow the wishes of his father as far as possible, and induced him to give up accompanying Charles to London, but only to visit him there after a while. Charles then went out with David, and walked beside his horse part of the way towards Barhead.

Long were the two young men seen to remain standing on the hill-side, not far from Barhead.

Charles Welstead stood by David's horse's neck, and they appeared to be in a deep and earnest conversation. At length, after repeatedly shaking hands, David rode on, and Charles turning hastily, sprang over a gate that led into a narrow wood that skirted the road-side. It was the same evening, that beyond that narrow strip of wood, under a large oak that stood on the hill within the grounds of Barhead House, which commanded a magnificent view over the country, two figures were seen in as earnest conversation as these young men had been. They were Charles Welstead and Clara Borringdon. Part of their conversation was overheard, either by a listening spirit, or a little-way-off waiting sister. It was thus :—

“ There is, and there can be in this world but one woman, dearest Clara, that my whole heart and my whole fate can unite themselves to. With her, life, let it be what it may, cannot be miserable : without her, I can bear life, I trust, in any shape, as the gift of God, but I do not desire it. But, at the same time, I leave that woman free as the winds. She shall make no sacrifice for me of comfort, of home, of peace of mind, or of family, because if she is mine, heart and soul and spirit, as I am hers, nothing that is virtuous can be a sacrifice : if she be not that, she is not

what I think her, and could not, therefore, make me happy. I say then, dearest Clara, if you now, or at any time do not feel that your heart is so devoted to me, that the greatest of all sacrifices would be to sacrifice your affection to me; you are, and shall be, free as a bird. But freedom I have not, I cannot desire it; I have but one wish which can never change, to live and die yours."

"And, dearest Charles," said a low, soft voice, "such freedom I renounce,—it never can or will be mine. There is nothing that can snatch me from you, but your want of faith in me. I think you will never shew that, or I do not know your heart and character; and, therefore, I am yours for ever. What I say, I say knowingly. I shall never release you except it be at your own request, and that would be a fatal day for me; for I must then, for the first time, doubt your noble nature."

"But, Clara, you are noble. You have but one motive in life, and that is to obey the highest principle of duty. How then? Your family is opposed to our union. We have not sought to conceal our attachment from them; they are opposed, and violently opposed to it. Can there then be peace and comfort in the prospect of the continuance of this attachment? Can you re-

concile our fixed resolve to maintain it to your duty? To your duty to your father? To your duty to the peace and unity of your family?"

"It is on my duty, Charles, that I take my calm and immoveable stand. There is no person on earth, no, nor your most earnest persuasions, could they, as they cannot, be employed for that purpose, that can make me swerve from my duty to my father. I shall obey him, as the clearest law of God and of conscience can demand obedience from me. I shall submit to remain separate from you,—I shall not, except it be under some extraordinary circumstances, indulge myself even in a correspondence with you. My father shall never have to complain of any want of filial love, duty, or obedience from me to him. I will continue to obey him even to my own loss and unhappiness; but there is still another duty,—that which I owe to God and to myself. My father may refuse his sanction to measures that my own heart sanctions; but he has no right to command me to violate my own judgment and affections, and ally myself according to his ideas of good or convenience. If he demand that, he steps beyond the sphere of parental duty or right; and it is my duty then to obey not him, but the voice of self-respect, of truth, and propriety, in my own soul. I can submit, I can suffer, but I cannot ally my-

self where my heart refuses its assent,—that would be falsehood to man, and offence to God.

“ My doctrine, dearest Charles, in such circumstances is, to have faith—firm, high, unwavering, and patient faith, and to wait the workings of Providence ; sure that by simple faith in Him and the future, mountains of opposition will be removed like mist. There wants but one thing—truth. It is time that proves truth. If we are not true to each other, Charles, let us be sure that we are never meant for each other. Let us be assured that our attachment was but the rootless fancy of youth, and we may deplore it, but shall come one day to feel that its termination is all right.”

“ Clara ! ” exclaimed Charles, “ you are a glorious soul ! Yes, we will have faith ! We will wait. We will go on doing our duty. My faith in you is like my faith in God ; it animates me to the most ardent zeal in working out my future fortunes. But still—who shall know his own strength ? And you ?—you are surrounded by fearful difficulties ; and if you do not yield to them, you must severely suffer. My course may be unfortunate, may be adverse, may be darkened ; I have all to achieve ; and, on the other hand, you will be surrounded by all the wishes, influences, and I may add, arts of your family. For-

tune, wealth, consideration, everything that can operate on a woman's mind, will be offered to you; and shall I stand in the way of all this? and will you continue to wish it yourself?"

As Charles Welstead said this in a somewhat low and faltering tone, the figure of Clara seemed to rise in stature and earnestness; she stepped somewhat backward, and said—

"Charles Welstead, I almost begin to fear that you do not yet know and love me, as I thought I knew, and as I love you! You have not that faith which I have. You fear that circumstances, which can alone influence common and worldly natures, can influence me. I know very well that such vows are often made, that they are daily broken, but by whom?"

She paused,—her voice was lost in the struggle of feeling in her heart, and tears came to her relief.

"Pardon me! forgive me, dearest Clara!" exclaimed Charles, seizing and pressing her hand to his lips,—“forgive me, I confess my weakness; but you do not know what it is to be poor, to be despised, to be maligned, and to feel that the worst and most sordid motives may be attributed to your affection.”

"But I at least know you, and your heart and your nature, Charles," said Clara, coming again

close to him, and gazing into his face. "I know and do not misdoubt you; and you, dearest Charles, can, and I am sure will, shew to the whole world by your conduct that you are noble and true, and far above all sordid aims as the sun is above the earth. You can shew it by your own course; you have talents and they *will* succeed; you can shew it by your faith, and by waiting the openings of the future."

"I will, I will!" exclaimed Charles. "Oh! I have the profoundest faith in you, and never shall you repent your confidence in me. I will work and wait, and owe all to the inspiration of your love and noble mind."

What succeeded was in a lower tone. There was a close and earnest talk, when Charles sprang away down the hill and disappeared over the gate of the little wood; and Clara and Frederica were seen slowly, and in silence, ascending by a winding, shrubby path homewards. The next day, Charles Welstead was on his way to London.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INTERLOPER, AND THE "PROUD LASSES."

WE must now take a few backward glances, and bring up a few particulars that contributed their part to place the affairs of which we write in their present position.

The mill was finished, and was now grinding away as briskly as it had ever done in the days of its former activity. A steady miller had been engaged, and now, with his wife and two or three chubby children, inhabited the old miller's cottage close by, which also had been put into thorough repair. The finishing of the mill, and the "house-warming" of the miller's cottage, had been celebrated by a supper at old Jacob Scantlebury's, at which Marcus Welstead presided, and his three sons were present. So far from hesitating at this condescension, he was so much pleased that the

thing had been managed without any one asking him for a farthing towards it—for Jacob religiously kept his word—that the old gentleman was in his best spirits on the occasion. It had occurred before the cold blast had blown down from Barhead, and chilled all Marcus's zeal for Sir Thomas. He was pleased to see so respectable a thing again on his estate. He was pleased to see what business came pouring in too, and after the first toast of prosperity to the mill, he had actually given, "Prosperity to Jacob Scantlebury, and may he continue to grind his corn in the new-risen mill for many a long year."

Old Jacob was at first quite knocked down by this unexpected kindness; but he got over it, and in rising to return thanks got into such a rambling and tangled discourse, where all sorts of scriptural metaphors and sayings were turned topsyturvy, as made much more laughter and merriment than the wittiest fellow in Christendom could have done. "Onions and garlic in the flesh-pots of E-a-gypt" were brought in to illustrate the jolly old state of things to which he had so often looked back. He declared that he had sate looking on the desolate old building for many and many a day from his windows, "like a spar on the house-top," till he felt "like a brother of dragoons and a consoler of owls." But "line

upon line, and pre-a-cept upon pre-a-cept," had done the work, as it always would. He had always admired the maxim, "that he that puts his hand to the plough should never look back to the harrow, or he would neither plough nor harrow, and then the miller would have nothing to grind. He was for stroke upon stroke, and heap upon heap, as Sampson said when he slew a thousand men with the jaw-bone of his ass. He likened himself and the miller to the two women who were grinding, and one was taken and the other left. It would soon be his lot to be taken; his grinders were wearing fast away, but he should always reflect with pleasure, after he was dead, that there would be work for the grinders of the fresh generation for many a day from the old mill again. He had often felt lonesome in the old house, when the mill stood still; but now the mill-wheel was good company for him, and the water dashing over it as good as a song—to say nothing of the miller himself—when he came out for a bit of a chat in the evening."

But if Mr. Jacob was confused, his wife was confusion itself. She occupied the head of the table, and with the exhilaration of the evening, became most talkative. She declared that so solitary had their house been before the mill was *inhabited* again, that she used to hear the birds

snoring in the woods as she sate on the hearth (she had heard the wood-pigeons cooing). There was no christian creature nearer than Benton, the cooper house, (Benton the cooper's house, she never used the possessive case,) and the screaming of farmer Radley geese was the only rational sound that reached her from morning till night. Now, she saw something entertaining every day. There was always a-going and a-coming from night till morning. Yesterday, old Watkisson horse had dropped down dead at the mill door, and died directly. One day, there was actually a hawker crying an interesting murder, and the other day three sailors had lost their way in the valley, because they'd come so far without seeing anybody to ask."

"Hod thy tongue, Sally," said Jacob, "or thou'll say th' moon is rising at breakfast-time again." And here Jacob related the dispute he and Sally had had this very morning.

"How red the moon is rising," said she, as she came in from calling me to breakfast.

"Moon?" says I; "it's sun, wench."

"Naa, Jacob, man, it's moon, conster na see?"

"Hod thy tongue; am I cracked, thinkster? It's the sun I tell thee."

"O ay—noo I see it's th' sun a setting," said Sally."

But if the company laughed at the ravelled discourse of old Jacob and his wife, they found it still more impossible to be serious when she related in a pathetic strain that their poor son Tommy, a great lad of fifteen, who sate looking none of the wisest at the table, had got a cold in his chest by running two miles with his mouth open, for the doctor, when the old cow died the other day.

Jacob and his wife were renowned through the neighbourhood for their tangled talk. It was thought one must have caught it of the other; and even Marcus, when he heard them thus hold forth one against the other, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, and ceased to wonder that his wife thought them poor creatures. But Jacob had asked him for no money, and that was a sign of much sense. Charles had arranged with George that he should take charge of the mill, and appropriate a certain proportion of the profits to his expenses in London, and another towards those of Philip in Oxford. Their professions once attained, and tolerable means of subsistence, the whole of the proceeds were to become George's.

But this was the only happy circumstance attending Charles's departure. His situation in every other respect had become mortifying in the extreme. Envy at the known preference of Clara

and Frederica Borringdon for himself and Philip, had roused the bad passions of less successful candidates for their favour. The most humiliating accounts of the circumstances of the Welsteads had been conveyed to Barhead House. The most malicious stories were everywhere circulated. It was said the old man was so much reduced that he had been obliged to give up his vaunted boast of making Charles a barrister and Philip a clergyman. They were actually building a mill themselves, and were to be millers and farmers, and vegetate on the spot. It was said that the most artful means had been used by the young men, nay, by the whole family, to engross the affections of the two rich heiresses. It was added, that they had so worked upon the feeble mind of the poor brother, that he was become disobedient to his father, and so peevish that he made the whole house miserable. On all sides, with a few beautiful exceptions, there existed nothing but coldness and distance towards them. The most marked attempts to slight and insult them were made on all public occasions by Jack Danvers and his friend Dick Mellor.

At the county ball, where neither Charles nor Philip ventured to ask Clara and Frederica to dance, that they might not excite the displeasure of their parents, Danvers and Mellor paraded

them with obvious triumph, and Mellor even intentionally brushed rudely against Charles in waltzing past.

On returning from Doncaster races, they were overtaken by Mellor and a troop of his companions, who were full of wine, and who stopped their horses, and insolently attempted to enter into conversation with them. They began inquiring after the mill. How it went on? What they charged for grinding? Which was miller, and which was millwright? One talked of sending in a few waggon loads of wheat to grind, and another asked if they should be at market on Saturday, as he had a prime sample to dispose of.

Mellor, with an air of insolent triumph, asked why the old gentleman did not come up and have a look at the coal works, adding, "He used to be very fussy there."

The blood of the young Welsteads, who were riding quietly homewards together, began to boil. They at first returned no answer to the insolent absurdities of their insulters. When persisted in, they begged them to ride on and leave them to themselves; but when Mellor began to taunt their father, anger flashed in their eyes, perhaps not the less fiercely because their father had forewarned them of such consequences from their mill-building scheme: they put spurs to their

horses, and making them spring almost upon those of Mellor and his companions, they raised the butt-ends of their whips, and Mellor and one of his comrades were laid senseless on the ground. The result might have been desperate, but at this moment the carriage of a gentleman known to be most friendly with the Welsteads drew near, and at sight of it, those who retained their seats struck the spurs into their horses, and galloped off at full speed. The Welsteads did not move from the spot. To the astonished inquiries of the gentleman and his family, they gave the facts of the case in explanation, and the character of Dick Mellor was too well known in contrast with that of the Welsteads to leave a doubt of the truth of it. The gentleman and his servants alighted, and assisted to raise the fallen men. Dick Mellor lay as if dead. He had received a severe blow on the head from the whip-stock of Philip, and there was the greatest alarm lest the injury was really fatal. It was some time before the slightest sign of life could be perceived, and he remained in a deep stupor till he was conveyed to a neighbouring cottage, and a surgeon being sent for he was bled, and restored in some degree to consciousness. The other young man soon raised himself from the road, and looking round like one awaking from sleep, appeared no little confused when

he saw who had joined the party. He was a young man of a very respectable family, and his shame was overwhelming before witnesses of his participation in this fray, such as he then saw there. He said it was a foolish piece of business; he really did not know how he had got into it, made a bungling apology, and rode off.

Mellor some weeks afterwards, being recovered, attempted to bring a charge of violent assault against the young Welsteads, but not one of his comrades would come forward on the occasion. The voice of the neighbourhood was utterly against him. However much the temporary favour of the Welsteads at Barhead had excited jealousy in many minds, this event changed the current of feeling. It was declared on all hands to be disgraceful. The conduct, bearing, and spirit of the young Welsteads were spoken of as having been ever most honourable; and it was declared that if the old gentleman had been improvident, that was no fault of theirs. Many gentlemen, who had for a time coldly returned their salutations, and shunned publicly their conversation, now again accosted them cordially, and some even congratulated them on chastising that upstart Mellor.

Dick Mellor was a genuine upstart. His father had been the steward of a certain nobleman, who,

under his management had grown poor, while it turned out that Dick's father had grown rich. On his purchase of an estate in this neighbourhood, so ample that it excited the deepest amazement of every one, the son of the old lord, who had recently come to the title by his father's death, began to open his eyes, and to institute an inquiry into the merits of Mr. Mellor's management. But this inquiry was cut short by the steward's house, office, and all the premises, being at this very juncture burnt down, with the books and everything in them. Foul suspicions, of course, clung to old Mellor, but Dick, who was blessed with an invincible conceit, and no delicacy of nerves, contrived to make himself agreeable, and by degrees necessary, to the wealthy and well-born Jack Danvers. It was under his auspices that he had made his way into a certain class of society, amongst the country squires. He was not like his friend Jack Danvers, however, either in person or capacity of acting the gentleman. Danvers had a remarkably handsome person; he stood six feet; was strongly and yet firmly built; and though devoted life and soul to country sports, especially hunting, he had had a first-rate education, had mixed much with the gentry and nobility both in town and country, and, to a certain extent, he read the

light works of the day, and could make himself not only agreeable, but very agreeable, in the best society. It is true that his days were chiefly spent in carrying his gun or following his hounds, which he did with a gusto, and with loud outcries that Nimrod himself could not have surpassed. In company he could not altogether lay by this tone and language of the field. There was a smack of the kennel, the pack, the warren, and the headlong chace, in his metaphors and illustrations; but then it was with such a fulness of enjoyment, and accompanied by so much vigour of spirits, and so much jollity, as well as of attention to the forms of society, that it gave a great charm to his conversation with many persons of far more delicate and cultivated minds and manners than himself.

It is true that his daily life and conduct would not bear much looking into. He was dissipated, reckless of the interests of others, domineering, and, when opposed, insolent and abusive. But it was rare that those in whose eyes he wished to stand well, were witnesses of these outbreaks and outrages; he had a sense of public opinion with all his tyrannous temper, and his equals saw only the fair side of him,—the black side was shown to inferiors and strangers.

Dick Mellor, on the contrary, was of a most

common stamp. He was of middle size, and the expression of his whole form, face, and carriage was simply that of conceit. His features were not handsome, nor ugly — they were common. A somewhat short face, nose with dilated nostrils, chin protruding, grey eyes, and light brown hair, were accompanied by a complexion of a generally-diffused redness, as if burnt by a summer sun, or fresh from a bottle of old port. He wore a roundish hat, with very flat brims, a blue neckerchief but very narrow, a green riding-coat buttoned across the chest with one button, and sloping away backwards with a narrow tail. To this costume were added white cord breeches and top-boots. He rode with a heavy buck-horn hooked riding whip, with which he was very dexterous in opening gates, and was a dare-devil at a leap in the hunting-field.

Dick never read much except the newspaper and the Sporting Magazine, but he was perfection in all that related to horses, dogs, markets, and management. He was ready to do anything at the command of Jack Danvers, whom he looked upon as a sort of wonder of the sporting world, and as his own patron. He had a knack of insinuating himself, as it were, hereditarily, into the affairs of those landowners with whom he was at all acquainted; and was a perfect Achilles at

stopping footpaths, hounding out poachers, and maintaining the quarrels of his friends. On these occasions he became amazingly "waspy," as he termed it. He prided himself on this quality, that of saying stinging and insolent things. In all this he went most conscientiously, or rather heartily to work, for he had no conception of what was truly noble in others, or mean in himself, except as it related to what he called standing by his friends through thick and thin.


He had managed to ingratiate himself wonderfully with Sir Thomas, who looked on him as a perfect oracle in all that related to management of mines and estates. Jack Danvers declared that he was the man, the only man in the neighbourhood—nay, he would match him against the whole county, and the next one too ; and, in fact, there was a good deal of truth in the boast. Dick had never had any delicacy or false shame to prevent him from making inquiries into anything that he wanted to know, and he was by no means shallow in all that related to judgment in land and cattle. He prided himself on driving a bargain, and by some magic or other could engage workmen and labourers at some shillings a week less than anybody else. Sir Thomas thought him worth anything as a steward ; but Dick did not hesitate to aspire to a higher post. He was in

the secret of Jack Danvers' suit for Clara, and never doubted that he would succeed, and if his great friend succeeded with the elder, what, said his conceit, should prevent him winning the younger? Would not Danvers speak a good word for him? Would not he do anything possible for him? And if he did, and that through the sister, when his wife—why, it was a certain affair. Accordingly, Frederica was much surprised to find herself become at once so much the object of Dick's politeness. At first she attributed it to his desire to be particularly agreeable to the family of Sir Thomas, in whose eyes he had won so much favour. But this delusion was not left her long; for Dick's attentions to her so far surpassed those that he bestowed on her sister, or the rest of the family, that every one noticed it, and Frederica was rallied on all sides on account of her elegant admirer. Sir Thomas said it was absurd;—Dick was too shrewd to commit himself so simply, but at length out it came, much to Frederica's amusement, and Sir Thomas's chagrin. Frederica's laughter was incessant at the "green wonder in love," as she called him. Lady Borringdon affected to laugh as heartily, and called him "foolish fellow." Sir Thomas took him aside, and gravely assured him that his attentions were not acceptable, and that if he did not

abandon every notion of the sort, he should be obliged to deprive himself of his services. Dick promised the most ready obedience, but laughed in his sleeve, saying to himself, "Ay, ay, the girl may laugh, but she'll come to in the end, never fear; and as for the old general, as he called Sir Thomas, hum, hum—never mind."

It was for this piece of assurance that Philip Welstead's whip struck so effectually on his skull, and nearly ended Dick's passion and life together.

Such were the circumstances up to the time of Charles's leaving home. Philip was now too in Oxford, and Dick Mellor having, as he termed it, a clear field, never doubted for a moment that his great friend Danvers and himself should one day win the "proud lasses" of Barhead, as he termed them.



CHAPTER IX.

SWEET AND BITTER.

CHARLES WELSTEAD had entered himself as student of the Inner Temple, and taken up his quarters in two rooms of the Temple Buildings. He had, moreover, placed himself as pupil with a celebrated barrister, to whom he had brought very influential introductions; and he thus began his course of study under peculiar advantages. The barrister, though of high standing and greatly occupied, was yet of a free and frank disposition, and in the hours during which he could relax from his arduous daily labours, was as light-headed and friendly as a boy. He treated Charles with particular respect, and not only directed his studies and explained away his difficulties, but gave him, after a little acquaintance, the post of writing particular letters for

him, for which, he said, it was his wont to pay a certain yearly sum, and which Charles could, therefore, accept without any repugnance. This was an unexpected source of additional income, and Charles saw, by his mode of proceeding with another pupil, that as he advanced he should derive the most signal advantages from reading the cases for opinion, and the briefs put into the hands of this eminent counsel, and being practised by him in giving *his* private opinion upon them to his patron.

At first, however, as was natural, he found himself extremely solitary, poring in his dusky chambers over his calf-bound volumes of Coke on Lyttleton. His mind was in a new situation, and was drawn, spite of his stern determination to make the very best use of every moment, incessantly away, time after time, to the scenes which he had left surrounded by so many circumstances of anxiety. His heart ached when he thought of the weight of care that lay on his father's mind. He stood again under the oak with Clara, and gazed on her noble features, and listened to her spiritual tones and lofty sentiments; and in his lonely evening hours, as the roar of the great city thoroughfares reached him in his silent room, what would he not have given to have had David Borringdon occupying the

vacant chair on the other side of the fire, to have talked over with him all that had materially interested them at Scartland and Barhead !

But he did not by any means want for agreeable society, when he chose to go out and seek it. He had brought, or rather there had gone before him, the most warm and zealous letters in his behalf from Barhead to Miss Jesse Borringdon, the sister of Sir Thomas, the aunt of Clara and Frederica, with whom they had been brought up. Frederica had told her aunt that she must treat Charles as a son, and she would find him one ; she must love him as she herself, i. e. Frederica did ; and David had said that in Charles she must see the dearest friend that he had. Miss Jesse Borringdon, indeed, was by no means ill-informed, out of more quarters than one, how things stood in reference to Charles Welstead and Barhead. Sir Thomas had besought her not to refuse her hospitality to the young man, who, he fancied, had a good deal of merit, though not desirable as a match for Clara, when so many splendid ones in the county were open to her. But by seeing him occasionally at her house, and acquiring his confidence, she might be able to shew him, without directly seeming to attempt it, how improper it was for him to aim

at any correspondence with Clara, contrary to her father's will. She might exercise a good influence on the young man's mind, by which, being absent from Clara, he might gradually forget her, or rather forget his youthful folly.

Miss Jesse Borringdon saw therefore, exactly, how the matter stood. The old people were against Charles Welstead, the young people were zealously for him; and she took her resolve accordingly. Miss Jesse was a very sensible, well-informed woman, amiable and discreet. She was an old maid; but one of those old maids that one wonders why and how they are so. She was tall, of good figure, and though now more than fifty, of a fresh and most agreeable countenance. For her age she was handsome; and must have been, and was universally said, in her youth to have been quite handsome; yet agreeable, good-looking, extremely pleasant in disposition, and tolerably rich, no one could recollect that she had had offers, or had refused offers, or had suffered from any faithlessness or disappointment in love matters. It was strange, and yet we see no unfrequent instances of these strange cases in life. Whether she was so conscientiously tender of other people's feelings that she never had divulged to any mortal affectionate

overtures that she had received, or however it was, no one could recollect her boasting of any such refusal, or of her making assertions that she never meant to marry.

She had dropped, as it were, quietly and naturally into her present mode of life. She had a good house, was fond of good, and particularly intellectual, society ; was always smiling and kind, as if so perfectly at unison with herself, and not merely content, but happy in the peaceful course that she was pursuing along the path of life. Her house always had an air of elegant and pleasing quiet about it. Though she had many acquaintances, they fell in individually, or in little social groups, so naturally that you never found anything that you could by any means call dissipation there. It was only once or twice in a year that she gave one of those great parties which she was holding when her brother's family arrived from India, and which she called paying off her small debts ; clearing the atmosphere of the clouds of returned invitations that had accumulated there. Charles Welstead often, when he called in an evening, found her alone, or with a single female friend ; and then they had a deal to discuss of books and passing matters of interest, that were very delightful to him who passed so

much time in the sober company of his professional volumes; or he read to her some work of the day.

Miss Jesse was as calm and full of a sweet repose as her house. It was, in fact, the soul that diffused its character over her abode. She seemed never to be troubled with the stormy passions that agitated other people. Shocked she could be, and quietly astonished at people, things, and opinions, and could from such shrink, as it were, silently, and almost unobservedly, into herself; but she seldom, if ever, dealt in violent epithets against them, or took violent antipathies or resentments. On the contrary, she was strongly drawn to excellent people, and sympathized vividly with all that was going on for the relief of the less favoured classes of society, and was the active member of a variety of benevolent associations.

Her conduct, as it regarded Charles Welstead and Barhead, was dictated by the wisest prudence. She never avoided speaking of her relatives at Barhead, when their names were introduced in her presence. She spoke of them in the tone of mutual friends, but never launched into any of those praises and evidences of admiring affection for the young people, that one would warrant from her character to live in her

heart. She talked of them as a matter of course, so that Charles heard something more or less of them at each visit, but nothing that could by any means excite his imagination, or disturb the serenity of his mind. It was from David that he gleaned the more precise and unsettling particulars.

Miss Jesse Borringdon's circle of friends presented a considerable number who invited Charles to their houses, and he had thus a sufficiently varied round of places of resort and social enjoyment opened to him; but the person to whom she particularly made a point of introducing and recommending him was her solicitor, Mr. Frodsham. He was a man in great and influential practice, and she conceived that his acquaintance might be of the most effectual use to Charles, both during his years of study, and afterwards, when he entered on his course of professional life. Mr. Frodsham was a widower of about fifty, with one daughter, a young lady of about four-and-twenty, who kept his house.

"Mr. Frodsham will be a most valuable acquaintance for you, Mr. Welstead," said Miss Jesse, as she gave him a note to that gentleman, "a most valuable one; but you must not fall in love with Miss Harriet," added she, smiling

significantly; "and I think you won't. But mind what I say—remember, you must not."

Charles, laughing, promised to remember her injunction, though he was at the same time filled with considerable wonder at it. It was the only instance in which, as he afterwards observed, she ever made such a remark to him, and it struck the more deeply into his mind the more he reflected upon it.

He found, on presenting Miss Jesse's note, a frank, friendly-looking man in Mr. Frodsham, who said at once, "Ay, I shall have much pleasure in cultivating your acquaintance, and in being of any use to you if I can. I am quite sure you are one of the right sort, being one of Miss Borringdon's friends. Come and dine with me on Sunday. I always like a cheerful friend or two on that day, for then I can entirely throw off affairs and thoughts of business, and enjoy their society. On other days I am often too tired, and too late home. There is my address, Mr. Welstead," looking again at the note; "I live, you will see, at Walthamstow. You'll always find coaches at the Four Swans in Bishopsgate-street going there; or, as you are young, you can pop into an omnibus at the Flower-pot in the same street, which will set you down at Clapton Gate, and then it is a nice

walk over the meadows to my house. We shall expect you on Sunday; three o'clock is our dinner-hour that day; friends can then get back at a good hour if they like;—we shall expect you. I must now go down to Westminster." So saying, he stuffed a lot of papers into a blue bag, they descended the stairs together, he gave Charles a friendly nod, and entered a cab that stood waiting at the door for him.

On Sunday, Charles did not fail to keep the engagement. He found, however, no coach at the Four Swans at the time he wanted it, and so proceeded by a passing omnibus to the Clapton Gate. Here the tollman directed him down the Lea Bridge Road, and the tollman on the bridge pointed out to him the foot-path running across the meadow, and the houses of Walthamstow in the distance. The freshness of the air, the greenness of the meadow, and the wooded landscape beyond, had on Charles's mind, after his fortnight's engulphment in London, a peculiar effect. They seemed to give him an actual refreshment, He breathed with the pure air immediate vigour and elasticity of mind. He strode rapidly across the great green expanse of meadows; found himself in the midst of corn-fields that had but lately been cleared, for it was still September; and finally, emerging at the lower end of Waltham-

stow, was directed by a villager to a lodge that led up a shrubbery towards a handsome house amidst trees so tall, and ground so pleasant, that he felt himself most agreeably affected. There was all the repose and nobility of nature, with more finished elegance than he had been accustomed to at Scartland.

As the afternoon was warm, he found Mr. Frodsham and his daughter sitting in the open air on the lawn, beneath a very large beech. Mr. Frodsham immediately came forward to meet him in an easy, friendly manner, introduced him to his daughter, and bade him, if not too warm with walking, to take a seat.

As they sat here beneath this fine old tree, the scene around them was peculiarly delightful. Tall shrubs made actual walls of evergreen around them, and then tall trees lifted their fine heads still higher. The smooth-shorn lawn, the flower-beds gay with autumn flowers, especially dahlias, and even many roses, invested the scene with much garden beauty. Below, the house stood handsome and substantial, with open French windows to the ground, white walls, and its close-drawn venetian blinds to keep out the bright sunshine. The eye, following the winding walks, caught, farther on, in an opposite direction to that by which Charles had entered, a

pleasant field, only separated from the garden by light iron hurdles. It was a beautiful retirement for the work-wearied spirit from London. What, however, gave the greatest charm to the spot were the inhabitants. Mr. Frodsham seemed the very personification of friendship and *bon-homie* here away from his law affairs, and his daughter seemed to live, as it were, almost entirely for her father.

Charles could not help contemplating her with peculiar, and to him not easily explainable feelings. The words of Miss Jesse Borringdon were continually present to his mind, accompanied by an everlasting query of "Why so? Why did she say that?"

Miss Frodsham received Charles in a particularly easy, but by no means forward manner. There was something in it that, like that of her father, struck him as very friendly and sincere. There was nothing that appeared at all dangerous in her. She was by no means very handsome. She was of nearly middle height; of rather light and agile form. Her features rather expressed intelligence than were moulded in beauty. Her hair was indeed fine, and extremely black; her eye-brows, of equally jetty hue, were well arched; and her dark brown eyes were large and expressive. But the general contour of her face

did not equal the excellence of her features ; at the same time that you were obliged to confess that her countenance had, on the whole, a very attractive expression. Her complexion, though not fair, was clear, and her colour rose sometimes into a peculiar richness of roseate tint.


In a mind that was occupied with the fine image and the intellectual face of Clara Borringdon, however, there was nothing in Miss Harriet Frodsham to fix the attention beyond the kindness that seemed to animate her. Mr. Frodsham asked Charles about his native place ; said that near London it was only *very* wealthy people who could indulge themselves in such amplitude of space as they who lived far off could ; and taking his daughter on his arm, walked round what he called his own little premises to show them to his guest. These premises, however, bore every evidence of wealth in their possessor. They had every accessory of conservatories, vine-houses, and forcing-houses, and the gardens were full of every species of fruit and production that skilful hands and no want of means could raise there. A servant in handsome livery met them in the shrubbery on their way back, and announced that dinner was on the table.

Charles found the interior of the house equally expressive of wealth and taste as the exterior.

The rooms were handsome and richly furnished ; the dinner was elegant, and served with great propriety ; but there was no guest that day besides himself. Miss Frodsham said “ ’twas odd ” that none of their friends, on so fine a day, had come out ; and Mr. Frodsham said it was lucky that they had caught Mr. Welstead. The circumstance, however, gave Charles opportunity of becoming more acquainted with these new friends than he otherwise might have done in six months. A variety of things were talked over in a very easy and agreeable way. As Mr. Frodsham was fond of indulging in a nap after dinner when he had not many friends about him, he sent Charles off with Miss Frodsham into the drawing-room, where he found still increasing occasion to admire the great extent of her general reading. At his request, she played and sung several airs to him, and that with very superior execution ; and they then turned over a variety of books and compared their tastes by them. Mr. Frodsham joined them at tea, and when Charles, as strange to the neighbourhood, at an early hour took leave, father and daughter prepared to accompany him part of the way across the fields. It was a splendid autumn evening, and all seemed to enjoy their walk in no ordinary degree. When they bade him good evening, Charles, as he strode

over the Clapton meadows, congratulated himself greatly on his acquaintance. They had bade him come often, and he said to himself, "I shall certainly go often. They are really kind, intelligent people, and what a charming walk, and charming spot to spend a Sunday afternoon in ! Certainly I shall often retrace this path;" and he turned, gave one more gaze at the woody scenery in which his friends had vanished, before he issued into the highway.

Such were the friends whom Charles found in his early sojourn in London. Time still went on, and found Miss Jesse Borringdon and the Frodshams the foremost on his list of London friends. His close and growing connexion with them had indeed, after a great lapse of time, tended to prevent his making so many others, or making them so much friends as he otherwise would. He had a considerable circle of acquaintance, but none that he so regularly associated with as these. Sir Thomas Torrent, the barrister whose pupil he was, had continued to show the same friendly interest in him; but he was so plunged in excessive practice, and so engrossed by numbers of great people, that Charles was content to enjoy his presence occasionally at his chambers, and rarely went out to his house, which was, in fact, far out of town, at Wimbledon.



With Miss Jesse Borringdon the case was different. The regular and friendly intercourse between her and Charles had ripened into a sincere friendship. She seemed to have acquired all the affection of a mother for him, and that had led to some serious conversations and explanations, which had materially altered her views on one question, though no one could have observed in her anything that could give the slightest ground for a gossip's assertion, that she indulged the hope of one day calling Charles her nephew.

The Frodshams, father and daughter, had grown as familiar friends as it was possible for friends to become. They always expected to see Charles to spend the Sunday afternoon with them, and he was begged to come and breathe the fresh air, and sleep out there as often as he desired. He had a bed-room there, which he came to look upon quite as his own, and in short, Walthamstow had become a sort of second home to him.

For a time, nothing could have gone on more satisfactorily than his studies and affairs. He had in Sir Thomas Torrent and Mr. Frodsham the best possible guides in his legal studies, and felt that he made rapid progress. Philip, at Oxford, had written that he had made very pleasant acquaintances, and was very happy, and hard at

work. The mill at Scartland was in full and profitable employ, and the health of his parents was good. But soon, things began to get out of this smooth course. Letters from George came, complaining that Philip was not so economical as he ought to be. He was making greater and more frequent demands than he ought to have need of, or than he had any claim to. Charles wrote and gently expostulated with Philip. This seemed to have all due effect for a time, and brought at least the most earnest promises from Philip. But this did not last long. When Charles had, after a time, occasion to write to George, for his own trivial remittance, for he made his payment from Sir Thomas Torrent nearly serve for all his very careful expenditure, he received from George further complaints of the proceedings of Philip, and assurances that if he were allowed to go on as he was going at present, it would cripple all the resources of the mill, and that it might as well be shut up. These complaints were accompanied by a statement of what Philip had drawn within the last year, and presented an account that struck Charles with the strongest alarm. This alarm was not, however, so much on account of the actual money spent, though that was serious enough, but because it shewed him that Philip must have fallen into an imprudent course

of life, that threatened a thousand evils. He therefore wrote at once to him in a manner that expressed his anxiety. He told him what accounts George had sent to him, and expressed his surprise and grief at the discovery that it made to him of Philip's weakness. He reminded him of the peculiar circumstances under which they were pursuing their educations, and of the blow that any misconduct on their parts must prove to their parents as well as to their own prospects. He demanded a full and faithful confession from Philip of the causes of his extravagance, of his mode of life and companions. A few posts brought him a long letter from Philip. It was composed in the most self-condemnatory spirit. It made confession of the utmost thoughtlessness and weakness. Philip stated that no one could blame him more than he did himself. He had, he said, been led on by a troop of gay companions, whose good-nature had been so attractive, that he had fallen into their habits before he was well aware whither he was going. Suppers, rowing-matches, riding, and driving, had followed one another rapidly, and he had felt no power to resist or draw back. He confessed, and that in a manner which evidenced that it was with tears and agony of heart, that he was not fit to live amongst such jovial and

wealthy young men ; that he despaired of, despised, and hated himself. He implored Charles to tell him what to do ; to advise, and to help him. When he alluded to his parents, and the grief he had occasioned them, the hand-writing became agitated and almost illegible. There were traces of the blotting effect of tears. " Help me, advise me, dearest Charles, for God's sake, or I am lost. Help me, or I must curse myself and fly—but I know not whither."

CHAPTER X.

A COLLEGE SCRAPE.

It was late on a dismal winter's evening that Charles read this letter. He had stretched himself, after his solitary tea, on a couple of chairs, and fallen asleep, tired and stupified with a long, hard day's reading. The postman, on his last round, had knocked and left this Job's message. He sate, when he had finished it, like one who is not really living where he is, but afar off. His body seemed only there,—his soul was gone on a desperate errand. His fire had burnt out; his room looked dim and cheerless. The candle, by which he had read, burned down into the stick; yet still he sate silent, motionless. At length he rose hastily, and wrapping himself in the counterpane of his bed, flung himself upon it, and lay there as if insensible to the freezing, searching

air of that winter's night, but not to sleep. By three o'clock he was up, had lit his fire, boiled some coffee, stuffed some articles into a travelling bag, and was before five on his way along the Strand towards Charing Cross.

It was a bitter, bleak, soul-and-body congealing morning. The lamps still burned dimly. The watchmen were still, here and there, moving slowly along, wrapped in their thick-caped coats. There was a low but piercing wind, that seemed to cut through the chest, and penetrate the very marrow. Charles hastened on in the half-darkness, wrapped in a large cloak, and lugging along his bag; and taking a direction to the right before reaching Charing Cross, finally, after traversing several streets, stopped at the Swan, Regent's Circus. Here a coach was in the act of starting. Boxes and bags, and even passengers, at that hour, and in that inclement season, were ascending to the roof. Charles entered the inside. The whip cracked, there was a clucking, hissing, and sort of chirruping whistle from the coachman, and they were on their way to Oxford.

The evening of that day he was sitting with Philip in his apartments in King's College. If he were less solitary than on the previous evening, he was not the less miserable. The strange astonishment and consternation that had seized

him on reading Philip's letter were gone, and had given place to a lively but racking sympathy. There was no need for him to heap upbraidings on his brother,—Philip was overwhelmed with his own. There was no need to point out to him the consequences of his thoughtless conduct,—he was grievously alive to them. He sate there, no longer the joyous and merry Philip, but pale, haggard, only changing his posture as a convulsion of tears seemed to bend him double, and wring his heart with a spasmodic agony. Charles could only sit as motionless, and listen to his deep-drawn sighs and groans.

They sat thus all night; Charles was afraid to leave him to himself, and he had no hope of sleep if he retired to rest. There they sat, in two old arm-chairs, before the ashy fire; sometimes in long silence, which was terminated by Philip rising, pacing the apartment, and uttering low internal groans and striking his clenched fist against his forehead; or by Charles, in a subdued tone, inquiring the names of his associates and his creditors. He made him bring out all his bills, of which he took a particular account, and bade him make an unreserved disclosure of the very worst particulars of his affairs, as the only means of preparing a chance of escape from them. The more he saw, the more consolation

he gathered from one source ; he saw that Philip's moral nature was unchanged. His heart was good as ever, his wishes were as strongly on the side of propriety, his affections were as lively, and from this source arose the most acute pangs of that remorse which devoured him. His parents, Charles, Frederica,—the anguish and anxiety he had prepared for them, were what wrung him most vehemently.

But whatever comfort Charles derived from this discovery, was more than counterbalanced by another, which filled him with actual despair. It was that Philip, however well meaning, was totally destitute of firmness. He was like a bull-rush in his resolutions, that the current of persuasion and example swayed any way. While he had had somebody, as at home, to think and resolve for him, he was safe ; but here he was as weak to resist the wishes of his companions, as a piece of cork that floats away on the surface of the stream. And what then was to be done ? Philip's own grief sprung out of the knowledge of this weakness in himself. When he vowed to make a total change, to be strong, to resist, which he did at the earnest solicitation of his brother, it was faintly, feebly, without any inward conviction that he could do it. The case seemed hopeless. Should he quit college ? What should

he do? Into what other profession could he enter without similar trials? Who then should inherit that valuable church living which his mother's brother was, in fact, reserving for his acceptance in a lovely country not more than seven miles from Scartland? To quit college was to renounce not only this secure prospect, but every prospect; he must abandon every hope of taking an honourable stand in society, much less of being useful to his fellow-creatures. Charles looked with horror on the probabilities before Philip. How often had it before happened, that youths who before were all happiness, became from this very same cause, in after-life, utter wrecks, aimless vagabonds; the disgrace of their connexions, and their own utter destruction!

Filled with a horror at his own reflections, Charles looked round in his mind for some refuge, some scheme of remedy and fortification for his weak brother against himself, and the allurements of his gay companions. He could find none.

The morning advanced upon them in this condition. It came slowly, steadily, pale and grimly in upon them. Never had Charles, till that moment, known what was real wretchedness; and comprehended how thoroughly self-destruction may, under the pressure of evil, and shame, and

despair, become in the sufferer's mind the preferable, ay, the alluring attraction. He shuddered as he felt this, and saw Philip sitting with his head propped against the jamb of the fire-place, his black hair hanging in matted masses, and his pale thin hand gripping the back of a chair that stood close to him, with a convulsive energy.

Everything in the place was of like aspect. The fire had burned out in its white ashes; the worn carpet, the old and poor furniture, for Philip, like many of his comrades, had not been extravagant in that respect, he had taken with the room the furniture of his predecessor. His books were lying in a confused heap on a table by the wall, his cap and gown thrown carelessly upon them, and various articles of apparel were lying here and there. The remains of the last evening's tea stood still unremoved, and the room was grown not only squalid in its aspect, but as cold as a grave.

The physical wretchedness was enough, but the wretchedness of the heart made that unfelt. Philip seemed sunk, after the agitation of the night, into a deep sleep of exhaustion. His hand still held by the chair back near him, but his head had sunk sideways against the wall, and the death-pale face, with the half-open and glazy eyes, gave a startling shock to Charles, as he turned

from the window, where he had been looking out without actually seeing anything, in his abstraction. He sprung forward to save his brother from sinking to the floor, and lifting him up, laid him on the sofa. The action did not in the least awaken him ; and Charles stood and gazed on the apparently lifeless form before him, with indescribable sensations. As he gazed, his tenderness gradually expelled his despair ; he felt a resolution growing in him, that unlocked the numbness of his feelings, and gave him an energy of desperation. “ He shall *not* be lost !” he exclaimed to himself. “ He *shall* be saved, spite of his weakness. For one weakness, shall so much that may be good and happy, and make others happy instead of wretched, be suffered to perish ?” The days of their past youth in the fields and woods of Scartland, came back to him as the breath of a spring morning. All Philip’s boyish joy and confidence in him ; his affection for him,—all came over him with a strange and beautiful power. “ He shall be saved !” he again exclaimed. “ It cannot be the will of Providence, that so much goodness of heart and so many noble qualities shall be all in vain bestowed.

A slight knock at the door interrupted his cogitations. It was the gyp, come to clean up and prepare breakfast. For a moment, Charles was

about to bid him go back, but he suddenly changed the passing thought, said his brother was ill, and now slept, but that it was better that he should have some coffee ready when he awoke; and, turning round, he took up a cloak and laid it over Philip, so as to cover his head as well as person. The man then went to work, as such men do, as still and stealthily as a cat. He lifted the ashes out of the grate with his hands, that he might make no noise; he soon had a fire laid and the kettle boiling, while, without his shoes, he moved about the room, swept it, and put all things in order. Philip's sleep was deep and undisturbed. Anon, all looked bright and comfortable, and the gyp, by signs, inquired of Charles whether he would not shave, wagging his hand about before his chin, and pointing to the kettle, to intimate that there was warm water. As Charles assented with a nod, he soon had Philip's shaving apparatus spread out, and stropped a razor with great expedition and wonderful silence. He then inquired, by signs, whether he should operate as barber, for which he was also qualified; on Charles shaking his head in the negative, he handed him Philip's dressing gown, and, as he took off his coat and waistcoat, the gyp laid them over his arm, and withdrew to brush them.

Shaved and washed, Charles felt himself some-

what revived in spirit, as well as refreshed. The kettle sung on the fire : the little breakfast-table stood invitingly with its clean white cloth, and cottage loaf, and butter, but Philip still slept on. Charles sate before the fire and thought. A thousand plans chased each other through his brain. He would see all Philip's companions ; he would show to them the injury they were doing ; he would appeal to their better feelings ; he would put it as the test of their friendship, that they should not invite or even admit Philip to their parties and excursions. He would see all his creditors, and endeavour to get them into some easy arrangement for the liquidation of Philip's debts, sternly charging them, however, in the name of his father, not to trust him any more. He would !—but here entered the gyp with his clothes, and asked, by signs again, whether he would not breakfast ? Philip still slept on. Charles thought and hoped that he might sleep some hours, he therefore nodded assent, and soon felt himself much warmed and comforted by some excellent coffee and toast, which latter the man manufactured in superb style, as fast as he needed it.

Breakfast was ended, but Philip still slept on, and Charles whispered to the gyp that he had better stay and attend to Philip, as he himself must go out awhile. The gyp smiled, nodded

a ready acceptance of the proposition, and at once set about re-arranging the little breakfast-table. The cloth was cleared ; the coffee-grounds disposed of, the pot reared by the fire to dry internally, the fire made up again, and the kettle left standing by it. Charles, satisfied that every attention would be given to Philip, if he awoke during his short absence, threw on his cloak and descended the winding stair into the college court.

CHAPTER XI.

AN OLD FRIEND WELL MET.

CHARLES Welstead's intention was first to go at once to Philip's chief creditor, an innkeeper, who had not only furnished horses and carriages, but had sent in various suppers, and a tremendous bill for wines, in which champagne cut a conspicuous figure. As he was issuing from the doorway at the foot of the stairs, into the court, fully occupied in thought with his subject, he was met by a tall gentleman in academical gown, who was coming hastily forwards with a letter in his hand. The action of the person, and the letter, caught Charles's attention, and the first glance at the gentleman made him certain that it was no other than an old fellow-collegian of his.

"Is not that Mr. Tregellis Randall?" inquired

Charles. "It is," was the reply. "Heavens! is this not Mr. Charles Welstead?"

"The same, dear Randall? how *glad* I am to see you, at this moment. I presume you are a fellow of this college. Thank Heaven that I have met you. Let me speak with you at your chambers."

"'Tis the very thing that, of all others, I would ask. How lucky!"

They turned round, recrossed the court, passed through an archway under the building, and within a private court, were, in another minute, in Mr. Randall's comfortable parlour.

"How thankful I am!" said Mr. Randall, taking Charles by both hands, and shaking them cordially; "how very thankful that I have thus met with you! I know your business here, and I deplore it deeply—yes deeply; but we must see what is to be done. You must not look so despairing. I've seen many a worse case. There, take that seat, and—" ringing the bell—"we'll have some breakfast. We can talk over it."

The door opened; he made a simple movement with his finger to the servant, and immediately the kettle entered, followed by a small dish of hot steaks, and another containing a roasted sausage on a toast.

"Now, while it is hot, my dear Charles," said

Mr. Randall, placing a chair ; " it is hardly reason to say grace when a steak is in question." He poured out coffee, helped Charles, and began to eat with a very creditable appetite himself. Charles, that he might not waste time by apologies, though he had just made a tolerable breakfast, also commenced an attack on what was set before him, though with a more tempered vigour.

" This is a very bad job of Mr. Philip's," resumed Mr. Randall. " I wish I had known that he was here sooner. Why didn't he bring an introduction to me ? I could have watched over the young dog, and I would have watched some of these rattle-brains who have led him, as well as themselves, and their old fathers at home, into these troubles."

" Had I but known that you were here," said Charles, " how happy should I have been to have put Philip under the safeguard of your friendship ; but you always said that the moment you took your degree, you were off into Devonshire to a good fat living that was waiting for you."

" Ay, but—" replied Mr. Randall, " it did not turn out so quick a matter as my young blood reckoned on. The old rector has got a new lease of life ; he has actually got two or three

new teeth, in his seventy-eighth year, and that, the doctors say, betokens a fresh term of life; he'll live to be ninety at least. Nay, what is most ominous, he has this last summer thrown off the wig that he has worn these twenty years, and now goes in his own white hair. Thin it is, it is true, but he says, and his hairdresser says, that five years ago he had none at all; only a little, short, almost invisible sort of swan's-down on his old skull. Well, luck to him! I can wait; and, when I do get in there, Charles, why you see, such is the air, and the healthy nature of the soil, I shall make up for it, by just living—for ever!”

Charles looked at his old friend with a degree of admiration. He remembered his sanguine temperament, and the eagerness with which he longed, and actually expected, to hasten back to his native scenes, and enjoy that life for which he seemed wholly formed. He had been a thorough man of the country. He had been brought up in a neighbourhood where many good families were located, and where he had acquired a taste for agreeable society, at the same time with that for a vivid enjoyment of the country. His gun and dog were his prime companions in the day. But he ranged the fields and woods not merely with the eye of a sportsman,

but that of a farmer and a naturalist. He would spend hours in watching the ways and proceedings of all sorts of creatures of the wilderness. He was an expert fisherman ; and, at the evening dinner-table, his anecdotes of his experience in such things were the most racy and interesting imaginable. His heart and hope were in the country. He went to college late. He had looked on himself as the certain heir to the estate of a maternal uncle, but the uncle had married late in life, and heirs enough soon followed. Cut off from this long-counted-on good, he had still that of a good living, in the possession of his elder brother ; and he went to Oxford to qualify himself for it. The result had been as he stated. He was now five-and-thirty ; a tall man with remarkably long legs, a broad chest, and high shoulders. His head was lofty in its build, and covered with strong, black, and already grizzled hair, cut short behind, and left full on the fore part of the head, which he often raised and heckled through, as it were, with his expanded fingers. His face was long, of a healthy complexion, and beneath his shaggy eye-brows beamed blue eyes of the most cordial, good-natured lustre.

Charles thought on all the hope deferred which would have made many hearts not only

sick but sore, and yet left his old friend so placid, so cheerful, and so much himself, that he drew from it courage and strength.

"But how I do sympathize with you, Tregellis," said Charles to him, "and how I do admire your patience!"

"Patience!—oh, a fig for patience. I've none of it, except patience perforce, and that the proverb says is medicine for a mad dog. No—I only do the best I can. I can't wish the old eternal Rector at either a worse or a better place, till Heaven wills it; and then there is a sweet angel, in a certain sweet old house on the banks of the Tamar, waiting, too. Oh, Charles! I hope you are in love, and then you will know what it is to have a comforter, that makes you almost rejoice that you have something to be comforted about. Well, I have let several small livings go by that fell out amongst the fellows, because they happened all to *be* small; and, what was worse, lay quite out of all my geography of friendship; and we both prefer waiting till the good old rectory, at home, as I call it, *does* fall in. But never mind that now—you see this letter—it is from a dear friend of yours, it is—"

And here Tregellis Randall held the address towards Charles.

"It is from David Borringdon," said Charles,

his eyes expanding wide with astonishment, and a deep crimson flushing over his whole face.

"Oh! oh!" said Mr. Randall, "I see—there *is* a little bird singing somewhere about the gardens at Barhead. Well then, courage, Charles, courage; we'll have all right. We will be masters, and these difficulties *shall* fly before us. Barhead and the Tamar! they shall be our watch-words, and they shall give us the power of giants. Bravo! victory!"

Charles looked in astonishment at Randall. He saw that he was still, even with some early snow-flakes on his head, the same creature of enthusiasm; and, instead of being inspirited by it, he felt his heart sink cold, and he sighed.

"Why are you gloomy?" said Randall; "why don't you rejoice with me that we shall rescue this poor lad?"

"Oh, heaven knows!" exclaimed Charles, how ardently I wish that—how gladly I would see a prospect of it! But how is that to be done? In the first place, his debts are such as all his, and all our united means, cannot liquidate in three years. In the next, what power on earth shall assure us that he shall not again fall into similar follies? The fault of my brother is, not that he is bad, but that he is weak. He will vow, he will resolve, and, like a snow-heap, at

the first or second warm gleam of his acquaintances' society, he will fall, or rather glide liquidly into those ruinous expenses."

"But he sha'n't!" said Randall. "We'll take care of that; we'll have him kept to his books. I'll keep a sharp look out after him. I have little now to do. It will be a good, salutary job for me. I'll have him out with me into Devonshire during the vacation. I'll strengthen him, I warrant you—never fear that. I'll have him through his examination as fast as possible, and then,—why, at Birkle-side, in his parsonage with Frederica;—oh, he'll be a very pattern of rectors. Ha, ha! you see I know all about it. Come! come! see here, David writes me——"

"But David!" interrupted Charles; "how, where, when, did you become acquainted with him? How is it that I never heard him mention you?"

"Nay, that I suppose is because *you* never mentioned me. Confess now, Charles—you had forgotten me. If you had ever mentioned me in David Borringdon's hearing, be sure he would have gone off a little into extacies about me. Lord bless you! the Borringdons are out of Devonshire. They have property adjoining ours.—my Nancy is a cousin of their's. I've known David Borringdon from a child, and many a

time has he ridden on my shoulders while I held him by the ancles, here, thus, before me, that I might show him the turkey-cock, and the dogs in the kennel, without their worrying him. Ah ! that cursed India, it has almost killed him ; but has not killed his generous, simple, boy-like heart. God bless him ! ”

Randall whisked his handkerchief across his eyes.

“ Well, as to the debts,” he then said, “ that need not give us a moment’s trouble. David tells me that Frederica is just as firmly attached to Philip as ever. She says she knows his good heart, and can forgive his weakness. That he must and shall be set right, cost what it will. She has written to him a letter, which David says would make a very fool grow wise, he’s sure, and a rush harden itself into an oak. She has suffered, and is prepared to suffer, to save Philip. She has refused every offer, and these have been splendid ; and now, that the news of Philip’s extravagance has given fresh arguments to her parents, she clings more vigorously than ever to the hope of saving him. She will love and make him a good man, or die broken-hearted for him—depend upon it. David says he is sure of it. But his debts—David says, must be paid at once, and here is his order for it.”

“No, never! No, that shall not be!” exclaimed Charles, rising from his seat. “That never shall be done. Never shall Philip’s debts be paid by any Borringdon!”

“By any Borringdon?” said Mr. Randall in unfeigned surprise. “Why not by any Borringdon? Have the Borringdons then so offended you, Charles? Have you quarrelled—good Heavens! what is it?”

“Oh no!” said Charles, reseating himself; “nothing of the kind. They have not offended me; at least, the young people. We have not quarrelled—that is not it. But I know what has already been said, and not only said but spread, and that diligently, all round our neighbourhood, by persons in closest connexion with the Borringdons—at least with the old people.”

“Well, and what do they say?” asked Mr. Randall, quietly but firmly.

“Say!” retorted Charles, “say—why, to be plain, Tregellis, as you know, I presume, all about these matters—it has been said, and that assiduously, and for the plainest purposes, that both I and Philip are pursuing our education at the expense of the young Borringdons. Yes, David—Frederica—nay, even—”

“Well, out with it,” said Randall, with a

quiet, significant smile, and friendly nod—"even Clara herself."

"Yes, yes," said Charles hastily and indignantly, "even on Clara herself they have dared to cast such a charge. They have dared to say that we, the poor reduced Welsteads, the millers, the beggars of Scartland, as they are pleased to style us, are maintained by the purses of David and his sisters. Yes, Randall, would you believe it? they dare even to implicate that good, but most prudent of women, Miss Jesse Borringdon, in the slander. She is the medium, the almoner of her nephew and nieces. Nay, they spy and dog me into the closest recesses of my friendships, and my friend Frodsham is also boldly pronounced to be the one who receives and pays over to Philip and myself the necessary sums. Gracious Heaven! what do they think us made of?"

"Phoh! of just such stuff as themselves," said Randall. "Let them talk,—it is not the fact and they know it, and, in due time, everybody shall know it."

"But how can they?" exclaimed Charles. "Are you not going to realize the very thing they say? To pay Philip's debts with David and with Frederica Borringdon's money? How then can you or anybody—"

“ Silence ! ” exclaimed Randall, stamping doggedly—“ silence, and hear reason. I tell you, I am not going to do anything that you are raving about. I am *not* going to pay your brother’s debts at all, that I know of.”

“ What then ? ” asked Charles more calmly. “ What did you just now say about David’s order ? ”

“ Why this. David says, pay the poor fellow’s debts at once, and let him be happy ; and give him good advice—you know how to do it. This is David’s order, and it is like David,—perfectly good and beautifully simple. In one thing David is quite right ; I can give good advice—to Philip, and to David himself, and to you. I don’t then propose to pay Philip’s debts all at once. I think that would be a fool’s act, and nothing less. Pay his debts, forsooth ! and to-morrow, in the joy of his heart, all the covey of his cronies would flock round him to congratulate him, and the game would begin again. No, no ! I know a better thing than two of that. What must be done is just this. We must have an account, a complete account of his debts. We must see the chief creditors, and let them know that the young dog has been outrunning his tether ; that is only too common here, Heaven knows,—and we must tell them that if they get

anything at all, it must be by a reasonable arrangement for gradual payment. That by this, in time, they *will* get all. I'll manage all that ; but the youngster himself must be let no further into the matter than that I am taken into a knowledge of the affair, and am using my influence to stave off his creditors as long and well as I can. That will give me a command over him, and I shall keep my eyes pretty well on him too. I shall become his tutor ; I want a task, and I shall act the scarecrow to a lot of his most racketty and dangerous companions. As soon as we know what money must be actually paid down, we will then consider how it is to be raised. " Now," added he, " that's my scheme, and if you can tell me a better, let us have it."

" No, my dear Tregellis," said Charles, rising and shaking him heartily by the hand ; " excuse me, you have just hit on my own notion ; you have given me new life and hope. Under your care, Philip will get through, I am sure he will. Such a friend is all that he wants. He has always been used to it, and he needs as much as his daily bread a friend like you to lean on, and to guide him. It is a fatal habit—a great defect in his education that part is, and must be guarded against. How fortunate that you are still here !"

"There now!—you see," said Randall, "long as that old rector has lived, it's to some purpose. It has given me a chance of serving you, and—you know whom," added he, smiling significantly.

By Tregellis Randall's advice, Charles now returned to Philip's lodgings, to see how he was, and Randall promised in half an hour to call on him, and accompany him to one or two of the chief creditors. Charles found Philip awake, but sitting listlessly on the sofa, and his breakfast untouched. He had evidently been weeping passionately, and appeared in the very lowest state of despairing exhaustion. Charles, however, explained to him that he had found a friend. That, through his influence, he had no doubt matters would be arranged so as to allow him to proceed with his studies without apprehension from the myrmidons of the law, and that time would enable them to consider how the debts were to be discharged. Charles's spirits seemed to communicate themselves in some degree to his brother. He compelled him to wash and eat, and then, hearing Randall's foot on the stairs, he went out, and accompanied him in their round of business.

We must not dwell further on this matter. It was, for the present, arranged. The next evening, by Randall's advice, most of Philip's

companions were invited by him to take coffee with him on his brother's visit. Wine was not introduced, on the plea of Philip's still weak state. His distress had been only known to them under the guise of a severe attack of illness.

During the evening, Randall dropped in as by accident, and then said that he was glad to see so many of them together, for he was commissioned by Mr. Philip's friends to act as a good Mentor to him, and he meant to do it. "He had long had his eye both on them and him," he added, "though he then did not really know who Philip was; and he regretted to see that too many of them were laying up troubles both for themselves and their friends. He was very, very sorry for it, he said, and he did entreat them, as young men to whom, however thoughtless, he attributed none but the most honourable intentions, to give now as much attention to their studies as they had done to amusement, and they would hereafter thank him, not during their stay in the University, but every year of their lives."

"As for his young friend, Mr. Philip Welstead, he assured them that he should exert his influence to keep him out of such follies as had, he did not doubt, occasioned this illness; and he

should regard every young man as an enemy, and not as a friend, who gave him advice which might bring more sorrow after it."

This unexpected address was received in a very quiet and respectful manner, and evidently made a deep impression on some of those young men's minds, though some of them looked at each other, as much as to say, "Hear the preaching old codger!" and one of them said out loudly, "Oh, Mr. Randall, it's all very well for gentlemen of your years to talk so, but we must have a little fun in our day—it does not last so long."

"As you will, sir," said Randall; "only don't let your fun be at the expense of those you call your friends. If you cause some of them to neglect their studies, and run into debt, you are a robber, and nothing less,—and a robber of the worst kind, for you rob those youths at once of their peace and their prospects of future usefulness, and their parents of their comfort in their latter days. Of one thing be assured, that I will use all my influence to prevent your foolish fun being at the cost of this my young friend."

The solemn serenity with which this was said produced a deep silence. Mr. Randall then changed the subject, and, after some general conversation, in which he seemed to win wonder-

fully on his hearers, the young scholars withdrew. Mr. Randall then said that, on the morrow, he was going out for a couple of days snipe-shooting, to his friend Sir Alexander Croke's, and had got permission to take them with him. He should have a carriage ready for them at nine o'clock in the morning.

In three days Charles Welstead was returning by coach to town, in a very different mood to that in which he went down. Philip had recovered much of his spirits. He appeared resolved to begin a new course and a new discipline of mind; and seemed to cling to Mr. Tregellis Randall with a peculiar persuasion of support and strength. Mr. Randall had written to David Borringdon to propose that he should come, as soon as the weather would allow, and spend some time in Oxford, as on a visit to himself, but in reality as a companion for Philip, who would supersede his more dangerous ones. David had at once acceded to it, and no opposition had been raised by Sir Thomas or Lady Borringdon. It was evident that they had no idea of the actual cause of David's visit.

All this gave Charles great encouragement to hope for Philip's protection from the seductions of his friends. But this first difficulty thus happily in some degree cleared away, only

shewed a row of others behind. It was requisite that a certain sum of money should be raised immediately and sent down to Oxford. Charles's pride had refused that which was offered. He wrote to George, and told him all that was done, and begged that the necessary sum might be at once remitted to Randall. George returned for answer, that he thought Charles must be gone crazed. Did he think, he asked, that one single flour-mill could grind fast enough to supply the wasteful demand of a silly, thoughtless, extravagant lad like Philip? No, he saw plainly that if he consented to pay for Philip to-day, he might do it again to-morrow, and the next day, and so on, till the bailiff came and sold up the whole concern. He had, therefore, made up his mind to stop,—and he had stopped, and would not pay a single penny more than the yearly allowance agreed upon.

Charles wrote again, and remonstrated and entreated; but he might as well have written to one of the rocks on the moorlands. What was to be done? The money must be forthcoming by a certain day. He then called to mind that he had never himself claimed half the sum agreed upon for his own expenses, and he therefore wrote and said, he would ask no more favours of George, but he would ask and expect his own

due. He wanted, therefore, the amount due to himself. To his surprise, he received the whole sum by the next post, but without a single remark. This fact left a deep feeling of pain on his mind. He knew that he had deeply incensed George. He knew his stern and obstinate nature, and he felt that the ground of most painful and lasting alienation was probably laid between his brother and himself. He dreaded, too, the added misery that might through this be poured into the cup of his parents. He knew how George was accustomed to talk, and he had little hope but that Philip's wildness and waste would be made a theme to them that would render them wretched in the extreme.

These thoughts left a deep impression upon him that nothing could enable him to cast off. Yet he could not find, on scrutinising his motives, that he had done anything wrong. He determined, therefore, to leave the thing to time, resolving not to be induced by any circumstance, or irritation on the part of George, to add fire to his flame. He wrote to his mother also, explaining candidly all that had taken place, and what favourable circumstances there were to secure Philip from further folly. This he deemed necessary, to prepare for any outbreak of George, or any idle rumour. Having done this, he

turned to his books, and endeavoured to forget, as far as he could, all his vexations, in intense study.

But that was not to be done. His mother's reply was filled with the most grateful thanks for all he had so effectually done for his brother. She declared how proud she felt of the manly sense and generous purpose of her Charles; and she added that, at the cost of still further adding to his care and grief, she must open her heart, and ask also for his counsel. What she had to say would affect him deeply, but come it must to his knowledge, and a few days or weeks could make no great difference. She then went on to tell him his father was in the most critical situation; but the fact which she now proceeded to unfold was so startling to Charles, that we must pass on into another chapter properly to contemplate it and its consequences.

CHAPTER XII.

TROUBLE AND TRIAL.

CHARLES WELSTEAD knew pretty well that his father's estate was deeply encumbered, but he was not aware of the fact that the principal mortgagee was no other than Sir Thomas Borringdon. Sir Thomas, with the estate of Barhead, had also found himself in possession of a mortgage on the neighbouring estate of Scartland of £10,000. His attorney had represented to him that this was a most fortunate investment, as it would not only enable him to hold Mr. Marcus Welstead, who was known to be a warm and influential politician, in check, but even to make him useful in various ways.

He had thought that he saw this evidently, in the zeal with which Marcus had fallen into his views, and enlisted himself on his behalf on

coming into the country. But when he saw the attachment that had sprung up between his daughters and the sons of Marcus, he repented the familiarity of the families ; and, under the representations and counsels of Lady Borringdon, set about at once to break it. We have seen the source whence Lady Borringdon drew much of her inspiration and motive in the case. The family acquaintance was broken up. Marcus was superseded by Dick Mellor as economical counsellor, and all hope of Marcus Welstead's county influence was sacrificed to family pride and considerations.

The attorney consoled Sir Thomas with the observation that it might be quite as well to be on terms of distance and dissatisfaction with Mr. Welstead, as it was most desirable that the Scartland estate should be added to that of Barhead, and it would not have been so easy to accomplish that while Mr. Welstead was on terms of intimacy and of usefulness. It was the general opinion that the Welsteads could not hold out many years, and Sir Thomas would have the pretty safe chance of securing the estate.

Time had passed on. Some of the events we have already spoken of had taken place. The two sons of Marcus Welstead, who occasioned

the most alarm at Barhead and elsewhere, were gone out of the neighbourhood ; but still David, spite of all endeavours to the contrary, kept up his family visits at Scartland. He never troubled himself about the business of the estate,—that, he said, was quite right, in the management of his father. All he wanted was peace, and the recovery of his health. Nothing was, therefore, said to David on the many matters that occupied the mind of Sir Thomas, and still more that of Lady Borringdon and some of her new friends.

David, it was thought, could do little harm in talking with Mr. and Mrs. Welstead. The mortgage on the Scartland estate was never mentioned to him by his father or family ; but it was by Marcus himself, who was not without occasional apprehensions that he might have to suffer trouble or expense through it, from the present state of things between him and Sir Thomas ; and that David might on any such occasion use a friendly influence. In David's visits, however, all those topics that were matters of irritation between the two families were carefully avoided by the Welsteads, but not by David. He must relieve his mind, he said, by speaking it out about that Danvers and that Mellor ; and he would ask and talk about Charles

and Philip. There was no place where he felt himself so much at home as at Scartland, except when alone with his sisters.

But time and its schemes drove on. It was found that, though Charles and Philip Welstead were away, there was still no greater disposition in Clara or Frederica to fall into the plans laid for them. Clara seemed, by public opinion, quite appropriated to Jack Danvers, and therefore she received no other offers: yet Yoxby estate acquired no greater charms for her. Frederica received various and very splendid offers, especially from the eldest son of Lord Abbeylands, a match that was most vehemently pressed upon her by both her father and mother, but in vain. It was, however, in a few weeks' sojourn in the autumn at Bath, that Clara and Frederica produced the greatest sensation. They were seen everywhere with wonder and growing enthusiasm. They became the great attraction of all the public places and assemblies, and offers of the most brilliant nature were the consequence. They were thoroughly declined by the young ladies themselves.

The amazement and exasperation of Sir Thomas and Lady Borringdon were now beyond bounds. The girls, they said, were bewitched—they were fools—they were idiots. It was those young

Welsteads who were at the bottom of it. David did not escape. He was sternly forbidden to continue his visits to Scartland, and David immediately set off to the Highlands, where he joined a gentleman who was at once a sportsman and an artist; and, when the grouse shooting or fishing did not occupy him, was busy painting the magnificent views around him; while David was delighted in this glorious quiet to sit on the heather and talk to him. In the winter he returned to Edinburgh. Both London and Oxford were tabooed to him.

It would now have been a deplorable matter to have been admitted to the secrecy of Barhead House. The most severe and determined measures were resorted to, to break the fascination of the young ladies, and to compel them to accede to some alliance or other. Menaces of disinheritance, of perpetual forfeiture of the favour of their parents, were only exchanged for promises of the most princely establishments. There were wrath and scorn, and persuasion and tears, and indignant violence, which produced nothing but wretchedness. The two young ladies were calm, patient, and even kind, in their behaviour. Clara said, once and for ever, that no one should ever induce her to disobey her father in what was right, or disobey her heart and con-

science in the same. She was ready to suffer, but she would not suffer compulsion. Frederica was at first indignant, passionate, and sarcastic, but she soon adopted her sister's more dignified course, and let the storm roll over her. She began to believe in the omnipotence of patience. It was no longer the time in which cruel fathers could, willy nilly, compel their daughters into abhorrent wedlock, and the storm subsided into a calm of coldness and reserve on the part of Sir Thomas, and of haughty but measured insolence on the part of Lady Borringdon; which required, perhaps, more fortitude on the part of the daughters to bear, and bear amiably, than the tempest itself.

On poor Marcus Welstead this tempest fell with a double force. Dick Mellor had still preserved his absurd hope of coming in in the wake of his friend Danvers, after all, for the hand of Frederica. The great offers she had had and refused astonished him, but did not operate on his narrow mind. "Ay," said he, "she may rear and prance, as I've seen many a young jade do, but the day will come when admirers will all be offended, and then, swoop, she comes down into Dick's net!"

But he had latterly been accosted much in this style—

“What the devil, Dick, are you about? Here are those two cross-grained wenches setting us at defiance as if we were grooms and clodhoppers, and all for those two out-of-the-elbow miller fellows, and you do nothing to bother them in regular proper style.”

“What regular proper style? How am I to bother them? Are they not at London and Oxford, far enough out of my road?”

“The devil a bit of it! Why Dick, thy skull gets monstrous thick. Can’st not read me? What if the birds are gone a wool-gathering, don’t we know where the nest is?”

“Well, and what then?”

“Well, and what then? Why, don’t we know who can stick a firebrand into their nest in a twinkling? And that’s Sir Thomas. Is there not a good sheet of parchment in his strong box, with Scartland and £10,000 indorsed on it? Why is not that money called in? Egad, some people are as dense as the boulders on Blackstone Edge.”

“Whew!” exclaimed Dick Mellor. “I see! By the blazes, but that’s the very besom that sweeps the vermin clean to Jericho. It shall be done, and in no time. It’s done already, as it were.”

This precious hint was not lost. It was put in its most effectual shape to Lady Borringdon, and

by her to Sir Thomas. At first Sir Thomas did not respond as was expected. He had always calculated on this mortgage as security for getting possession of the whole estate. But what if he should call in his money, and Marcus Welstead should raise it, and pay it? That were a leap that could not be recalled. No, that once done, all were over. "I must consult my attorney." The attorney consulted, shook his head. "Won't do, I fear," said he. "True, I know that there are also other debts on that estate, but then the estate is a good one. It is improveable. It is at this moment worth £50,000 in the market. The Welsteads are old and esteemed in the county, and there will not be wanting those who may be strongly opposed to their being broken up. There are old and honourable feelings in this county, Sir Thomas. Stupendous efforts would be made; too, by Mr. Welstead, and he is a very clever man,—a very clever man, Sir Thomas. Nay, it might be hazardous."

Sir Thomas thought so too; he resisted the idea. But the tears and entreaties of Lady Boringdon, backed by the secret counsels of Danvers, who was now a great authority with her, for no one took care to bestow so many praises on her beauty, her talents, her ladylike dignity—to say nothing of their having now so long and strongly

striven for one object, that they had got up a spirit of partizanship that made them, in the phrase of the county, hand and glove—were not wholly unavailing.

Sir Thomas long resisted; but the battering-rams of pride, passion, and vengeance, swung by the lusty arms of Danvers, equally poised by ambition and mortification, shook, daily and nightly, the walls of Sir Thomas. The termination of the season at Bath came, and gave a tremendous sweep to the engine. What! were these silly girls to refuse and affront all the best men in the country? were they to be suffered to raise a feeling of resentment and hatred against the family? were they to put on their family and on their distinguished suitors, the affront of throwing themselves away on these penniless young men? Sir Thomas was again assailed, and his own feelings assenting, gave way. He once more consulted his attorney, and his attorney now could see reasons for calling in this money. There was so much incumbrance on the estate, that Welstead would be obliged to suffer the mortgage to be foreclosed, and Sir Thomas would get the estate; or, at least, thought Lady Borringdon and her instigators, drive out the last hope of the Welsteads, and the obstinate sisters.

Such were the causes which led to the for-

mal six months' notice that was issued by Sir Thomas, for Marcus Welstead to pay in the money. Charles read the fact of this notice in his mother's letter, with humiliating consternation. It seemed to him that all was now over; that utter destruction was come to the family, and that nothing could avert it. When he thought, too, of Clara and Frederica, a burning sensation rushed over him, as of a consuming shame and chagrin. What must he and Philip appear to them, when they knew these circumstances? Would they think anything, but that, availing themselves of their ignorance, they had been seeking clandestinely to win back their ruined property at their expense? Could they think anything but that it was a family plan, pursued most adroitly, for this base end? The feelings that sprung up in his soul, crowded one on the other with demon fury, and were insupportable. The place seemed to spin round with him; he flung himself on the ground, and rolled in convulsive agony of shame and anguish. Their enemies—what would be their triumph? Their friends—what *must* be their thoughts?

With a sudden spring he leaped up, and with a deathly pale visage, contracted as by a spasm, and with a violently shaking hand, he sate down and discharged the first solemn vow of his soul.

It was, to renounce all further claim to the affections of Clara. To declare that, having now the full knowledge of the circumstances stated to him by his mother, and seeing how matters really stood with her house, he bade a final adieu to his long-cherished hopes of happiness, and sought the only thing which in life was dear to him—that she might believe him guiltless of any design more selfish than that of winning her noble heart, by the noblest and most direct means.

Having written this, amid a convulsive torrent of tears, he flung his cloak around him, and hurried out to the post with it himself. When he returned to his chamber, he sate down and fell into a stupor of many mingling and confused thoughts; but, through all, the feeling of a total desolation ran, as the forerunner of despair. His heart was like lead, his wish was death; Hope, for a moment, died in his strong bosom, and the future appeared to him but a black track, hateful and accursed.

But anon, the violence of his grief subsided; he thought he would write to his mother, and endeavour to comfort her. Ha! but how? His whole frame shook again, and he sank his face into his hands and groaned forth—"It is all over!"

And yet, in a pure and noble bosom, the lights of buoyant hope are not so soon utterly extinguished.

It requires mighty powers of misfortune to kill; it requires desperate things to destroy the voice of aspiration in the truly strong and blameless heart. There came by degrees, feelings, as if, in the shock of his surprise and dismay, he had done wrong, grievous wrong to Clara. Had he not a hundred times told her that his father was poor? that he himself looked for little in his own career but the fruit of his own exertions? And did she once even look blank, or disappointed? Had she not always said, "Well, Charles, I shall confidently trust my fortune with yours. We shall have, one day, more than love needs; and will you deny me the satisfaction of having encouraged you in your struggles, that I may rejoice with you in your triumph?"

A very few days brought him the fullest confirmation of those feelings, in Clara's own letter. The tone and spirit of that letter carried him back, at once to the great tree on the slope of Barhead, where he took his leave of her. He saw once more the noble form rise, as it were, in the glow of offended dignity, but her face lit up with the purest glory of heavenly affection. It was in these words:

"Did I ever love you, Charles, for your wealth? Did you ever see or hear of me giving wealth a single grain's weight in my esti-

mates of character? Was it wealth, or circumstances, that drew our hearts together in the woods and wilds around Scartland? Have I, in those many, many blessed hours, in which I have lived in thought over those days, seen anything but a heavenly scene of young and happy hearts, created for each other? And will you put out all that beautiful light of the past, more divine to me than a thousand richest sunsets—more celestially ethereal than those evening gates of sun-lit clouds that seem to open into Paradise? Charles, I learn nothing that I did not before know, except the wicked act of wicked men that you have revealed to me; and Heaven forgive my father, for he is more deceived than sinning. But this excepted, you tell me nothing new. You are poor; you have many enemies; yes, many and powerful ones; but are these reasons that I should give you up? Give you up now I have so long loved you, so long tried you, and suffered for you, and hoped with you, and have seen you so bravely and generously advancing towards success, not ruin and despair?

“These are my words, Charles Welstead; these and none else. I will shout them to you across the wild hills and the wilder passions that separate us. They are the only words that true souls can, or should have, for those that are true like

them. They are given as the gracious gifts of God to his creatures, as the sun is to drive back darkness and frost, from the little path of life, into their native regions of night and death. No, dearest Charles, you are not going to sink, while I have an arm, or a voice, or an energy left to assist, or to inspirit you. But why do I say so? I know that already your nature has risen above the stunning shock: that your better courage is triumphant, and the voice of your Clara shall come to you as another throb in the revulsion of your aspirations, and you will bless it as a gift of the God of blessings, and not reject it, and abandon it in your blind pride. Oh, fie, Charles! fie on you! But do not imagine that you are going so readily to get rid of me. No; I am not going, like you, to give up and renounce, and fling away, as so much chaff, my best friends, because, forsooth, the world is unkind! What a reason for a reasonable man! No, do look at it, and laugh at it, as I do. Because the world is wicked, therefore—what? Therefore we shall be unkind to each other; reject each other, and do just the very thing that our enemies seek and long for of all things? Pshaw! what logic is that? Oh! you go to schools and colleges to learn logic! Most glorious logic; because the world—but no, I will not repeat the most wretched

reasoning that ever issued from your pen, dearest Charles. *My* logic tells me—and it is good and sensible logic, such as I will maintain against all the doctors and professors of Oxford, Cambridge, and the world to boot—that, because the world is *unkind*, we will be *kind* to each other. It is the very reason why we should cling closer, and suffer with more patience.

“I cannot tell how this great sorrow is to be overcome, and David is away; and I fear to tell him of it, for his health is so delicate, and it would agitate him so dreadfully, as he is so far away, and therefore unable to help us; but I know that it *will* be overcome, and shall prove but another bond to our souls and our lives.

“When we parted beneath the Barhead Oak, said I not that we want nothing but faith, and that, while we have that, no power on earth can sever us? In suffering and sorrow, I am doubly, trebly, tenfold thine,

“CLARA BORRINGTON.”

This letter of Clara's came like a breath of heaven to Charles's heart. His blood warmed, kindled, and rushed in richest harmony of sensation through his bosom. It was like an infusion of new life. He grew at once strong, calm, and, to a certain degree, happy. But with the

blissful current of his feelings there rose an under-current of shame and self-reproach. He blushed that he could for a moment have doubted a being so pure, generous, and noble. He flung himself on his knees, and with tears thanked God fervently, and with all his heart and soul, that He had given him the affections and support of a spirit so beautiful and true; and vowed before Him never more to doubt of her love, and never more to despair of His perfect and paternal providence.

He arose, and reflected calmly on the possibility of aiding in the prevention of the calamity which threatened his parents. He looked round and round, and, spite of his recent vows, and the strength infused by Clara's letter, he could not, for the life of him, tell where to turn for help. Four months of the time had already elapsed, and his mother told him that all applications for the advance of the money had been in vain. There had been various parties to see the estate, and to examine its titles and the extent of its encumbrances, and the result had always been the same,—the investment had been declined, while the state of their affairs, by every fresh transaction of this sort, was afresh and further exposed.

Under such circumstances, what was to be done? Could the money be found in London, and by

whom? At once he thought of his friend Frodsham. He was certain to know parties desirous of investment; but then, if the circumstances were so desperate, what availed it? It was in vain, however, that he revolved the matter; no other light dawned upon him. He wrote to his mother, and begged her to send him a faithful statement of the value of the property, and the whole amount of debt upon it. Furnished with this in a few days, he screwed up his resolution, though not without some internal shrinkings and misgivings, and set off for Mr. Frodsham's office.

Besides the repugnance that a young man, and one not accustomed to the rubs and scrubs of common business, has to unveil a scene of ruin to a friend with whom he has wished to stand well, Charles Welstead had gradually acquired so great a repugnance to call on Mr. Frodsham at his office, that he never did it except when sent for by him, or on some urgent occasion. He found, what seemed strange and unaccountable to him, but what almost every one else has felt in the same circumstances, that Mr. Frodsham at his house and at his office was two totally different men. At the one, he was frank, simple, joyous, and transparent as the water in his own garden fountain; at the other, he was cold, distant, still, and opaque. It seemed at his office as if he

hardly knew you. His recognition had something of surprise in it: his shake of the hand was a mere touch of the fingers. He motioned you to a chair, and inquired your errand, as if it was expected to be business. If it were only some trivial matter, he seemed as if he felt you an intruder, and would be glad to be rid of you. There was a total want of warmth, cordiality, and of himself, in fact, about him. He was here the mere lawyer and man of business; at home, he was the man and the friend.

CHAPTER XIII.

HELP AT HAND, AND TROUBLE IN THE DISTANCE.

FOR the reasons given in the last chapter, Charles Welstead hesitated a moment whether he should go to the office of Mr. Frödsham, or wait a few hours and seek him at his house in the evening. On the very step of the office door he paused, and felt inclined to decide on the latter course; but then again came the thought that he should have Miss Frödsham in the way, and to unfold such a rueful piece of business in his friend's hour of relaxation and enjoyment, would seem something like a shock, and might have a bad effect. He therefore entered firmly, rather than calmly and boldly, and was shown into Mr. Frödsham's private room. In this room was a clerk, listening to the reading aloud of a deed by a boy, while he carefully compared the

engrossed document with the draft so read. They rose and withdrew with their work. Having taken a chair as desired, and being left alone, his mind, with the nervousness of his business and his situation, seemed alive to all that was passing in the neighbouring apartments. In one he heard the clerk and his boy draw stools, and again commence their reading. In another, he heard the voice of Mr. Frodsham, in discourse with some one else, as it seemed, a client. Mr. Frodsham's tone seemed unusually loud and sharp, and he could catch the words, action—replevin—great villain—and scoundrelly transaction—several times repeated. "He will come out of it, I can tell you," again said Mr. Frodsham, "as a pigeon out of a chimney, as black as my shoe. Well! to-morrow, then, at twelve. Good morning."

Then banged a door; that of his apartment opened, and Mr. Frodsham entered with a smile on his countenance, as of some anticipated triumph.

"Aha! my friend Charles! what brings you here so early in the day? have you some knotty point that you want solved?"—Charles thought, yes, indeed have I, and knotty enough—"or what is it? My daughter is in town shopping, and

will be very glad to have your escort home. How are you held?"

There was a something much more cordial in Mr. Frodsham's tone and manner than was his professional wont. He took Charles's hand in both his, gave it a warm pressure, and pushed him gently backwards into a large easy chair. Charles felt at once encouraged, and yet half choked; he gasped as it were for breath, and Mr. Frodsham looked at him with amazement.

"I am come," at length he brought out,—“on a sad business; I seek your advice, dear Mr. Frodsham. I want your most serious help, in the most serious affair, and you have always been so kind to me that I have ventured to unfold it to you, and you alone. Indeed, who else is there in London to whom I could apply?"

Mr. Frodsham looked astonished, but was silent. Charles then drew forth the papers he had received from home, and stated in the calmest and clearest manner that he could, the whole case. When he had made the main facts clear, Mr. Frodsham, who had shown more and more symptoms of astonishment and interest, rose up from his chair, saying, "Good Heaven! what a misfortune! Why did you not tell me these things sooner? What a melancholy state of things for

the old people! what a trouble for you! But what can be done? What is it you want doing?"

"Simply this," said Charles, "that, if possible, this mortgage could be transferred; and that on looking over this statement, you will give me your candid opinion whether it be likely; whether, in fact, there is good security in the estate for all its debts?"

Mr. Frodsham took the papers; sat down, and running them over, he said, "Do I rightly understand the statements? The estate is valued at £50,000, and very improveable. The rental is £2,000 a-year, and capable of being much raised, but has not been done because the tenantry are chiefly old. There is a large amount of valuable timber on the property, and the debts are somewhat under £20,000. Value £50,000; incumbrances, £20,000; with a clear remainder of £30,000, and improveable? Income £2,000, and the interest not quite £1,000? Why, if I am right, my friend Charles, you are making a great cry about a little. But your mother says, 'various parties have looked at the property and the claims upon it, and all have declined to take the mortgage.' I freely confess, I do not understand it. There must be some mistake; or, if all be as it seems, I will take the mortgage myself; I will take the whole debt. I want an investment,

but we must see how the matter really stands. By the bye, why has not Mr. Welstead felled a good lot of his timber, and cleared off a good part of the debt? How is that?"

That had not struck Charles; but he imagined that it was because his father never liked to alter anything, and he was particularly fond of his woods.

"Ay, but the old proverb, you know," said Mr. Frodsham, "'we must cut our coat according to our cloth;' and yet, if there be really a rental of £2,000, and only £1,000 a-year of interest, where's the difficulty of meeting and tying?"

Charles could not tell; he knew that there was difficulty; he once heard old Jacob, the bailiff, say, that master had had some unlucky losses by trusting friends, which had at one time left him very little income indeed; that it was now mending, and would soon be capital, only the old farmers had been on low rents, and master would not raise them while they lived, and then he added, "till you young gentlemen are off his hands, it takes a good round sum."

Mr. Frodsham had been still poring over the papers, while Charles was talking; and when he ceased, he said—"Oh, I see. But there is still a mystery somewhere. My opinion is that the old gentleman has not had fair play, somehow.

We must see into that. He is probably depressed in his spirits, and is imposed on. There is a something, my friend, take my word for it, but we will find it out. We can soon come at it. I will send down a clerk of mine, a shrewd fellow, to learn who have been engaged as attorneys in these matters ; and, if all be as your mother states, and I have little doubt of it, make yourself easy, Charles, we will soon have Sir Thomas paid, and everybody else. Well, dismiss the business from your mind ; my man shall off down into Yorkshire in the morning. I shall stay and give him instructions, while you go home with Harriet."

Charles begged that he might at once write to his mother, and Mr. Frodsham, putting paper and pens before him, bade him write away, and write comfortably. Charles had not finished his epistle when Harriet Frodsham entered, and claimed Charles joyfully as her companion home. Her father was already gone to give the necessary instructions to his clerk, and on entering again he bade Harriet take Charles along with her, and be sure to amuse him, and drive the blue devils out of him, for he was in low spirits.

Charles, and Harriet Frodsham, accordingly, were soon in the Walthamstow coach. The noise and motion of the vehicle formed a perfect excuse for Charles talking little till they quitted it ;

for Harriet had always said that, to her, to converse in a coach was the worst of labours. He sate, therefore, silent in a corner, and the thoughts and feelings which occupied him may be sufficiently imagined. When they issued from it, however, at Mr. Frodsham's gate, Harriet looked at him with a close and searching glance, and said, "Charles, there is a secret grief on your mind; you must tell it me all, and we will help you to bear it."

And Charles did tell her all; he felt now no difficulty, having once discussed it with her father, and he knew, from his long intimacy with them both, that she would know it immediately from him. He knew how completely all matters of the kind were matters of mutual confidence between the father and daughter, and, indeed, how much the father relied on the acute sagacity of Harriet in all matters that were not merely technical. But besides this, time, and constant association, had made Charles look on Harriet as a sister, and treat and regard her as one. A sister he had never had, but Harriet was all that a sister could be to him. There was a zealous, and sincere, and untiring attention to his interests and comfort, that greatly attached him, but with a perfectly fraternal feeling, to her; and, in this close intimacy, he had long opened to

her his whole heart, hopes, plans, and circumstances. He had told her of his attachment to Clara, and Harriet had often begged him to tell her more and more of her and her character. He had never forgotten the strange words of Miss Jesse Borringdon; her warning him not to fall in love with Miss Frodsham; a warning of which she had from time to time reminded him, when rumours and remarks came to her ears of the great intimacy of Charles and Harriet; but he had never felt the slightest danger. His heart was too fully and admiringly occupied with the image of Clara, nor could he perceive that Harriet was at all desirous to disturb that image in his mind, or steal in behind it.

There were peculiarities in Harriet Frodsham's character, and they were very striking, and we shall soon have occasion to take notice of them—which had at first, and indeed often, excited Charles's wonder; but he attributed them to the perfect freedom of her mind from anything like art. He looked on Harriet as not only having a very shrewd insight into human nature, but a great contempt for many conventional notions, in which she had been strengthened by her father. He therefore regarded many freedoms of speech and action towards him, and, occasionally, others, but as proofs of the utter independence

of her mind, and quite as guarantees, rather than otherwise, against any tender impressions that might lurk under the guise of friendship.

Harriet Frodsham, then, was soon in possession of the whole present trouble of Charles, and her interest in it was marked by her usual generosity. She consoled and strengthened him with all her zealous eloquence; nay, she even did what she had done on many occasions, kissed him as a sister would a beloved brother, to console him, and said the matter *should* be made all quite satisfactory. She was sure her father would soon settle it; and, even if the estate would hardly cover the money, what did it matter? Her father would do that and more for Charles, at her request. Who, indeed, had he to care for but her, and what should he do accumulating such heaps of money, if not to oblige her; and how could he oblige her more than by obliging her dearest friends?

As she was talking, her father came in, and, turning lightly to him, she embraced and kissed him, and then leading him to Charles, she said—“I know all about it, papa, and you *must* and will take this affair into your own hands. You will—won’t you?—won’t you?”

As Mr. Frodsham did not speak, but only took hold of her ear and gave it a sportive

squeeze, she again flung her arms round his neck and said, "Oh, to be sure!—we'll say no more about it,—it *shall* be so."

Mr. Frodsham then told Charles that his man had full instructions, and that, at five in the morning, he would be in the coach at the Saracen's Head, for Yorkshire. The friends sate down to dinner, and the circumstances connected with this business brought on much conversation respecting Charles's family and native place. The three seemed drawn closer, and into a happier unity by this event. Mr. Frodsham said, that if all turned out, as he fully expected,"—"as it *shall*," interposed Harriet—"I shall go down to Scartland next week, and have every thing quite settled before I leave; and you, Harriet, shall go with me. I am sure you will be interested to see the country we have heard so much of from our friend Charles, and we shall both be happy to make the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Welstead. I really want a run into the country, and shall enjoy it uncommonly."

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Harriet—"oh, you good, dear creature, what a charming papa you are!—nay, you *shall* have the mortgage, if it were only to take me down to that dear Scartland. Oh, I know it now, just as if I had seen it for twenty years."

"Why then, if you know it so intimately, Harriet," said Mr. Frodsham, smiling, "there's the less reason to take you. Perhaps you'd better stay,—it's a long way, you know."

"You silly tyrant!" said Harriet, laughing, and at the same time rising from the table and giving him a slight box on the ear, and then kissing him again. "Now mind, if you don't go to Scartland *I will*. *I will* take the mortgage, do you hear? *I will* take it myself."

"And where will you get the money?" said her father.

"Oh, from you to be sure, or from twenty people. Do you think I could not borrow more than that any day I wished? Well, then, I shall go and—take *you* with me, Mr. Frodsham."

This was said in a mock gravity that produced a hearty laughter in both the gentlemen. Mr. Frodsham rose, shook hands with Charles, kissed Harriet, and said he must be off to bed, for he had a good deal of writing to do before breakfast in the morning, and should rise at five.

Charles and Harriet sate long, and continued the subject of the only interest at this moment. Harriet was highly elated at the prospect of the journey; and, when Charles quietly suggested that, after all, it might not be quite certain, she

exclaimed,—“ I tell you it is certain ! There is no more doubt of it than that I see you there ! ”

She assured him that she was quite serious in her resolve, that if her father could do such a thing as decline it, she would do it herself.

At a late hour, Charles took his leave, and set out to walk to London. It was not because there was not his usual room, his usual bed, and the usual cordial pressing to make use of them,—of the latter there was more than common ; but it was because it was necessary to subdue his excitement, that Charles set forth on this six miles' walk to town. He might as well have attempted to reach Scartland at a stride, and pay off Sir Thomas without the money, as attempt to sleep in his then state of mind, and with his blood running riot with the impetuosity of the unexpected hope and assurances now given him.

But, as he advanced over the pleasant fields, and then over the broad expanse of meadow between Walthamstow and Clapton, the moon, filling the clear Heaven of a fine April night with her lustre, and the cool breeze fanning his heated head, as he strode on with his hat in his hand, what were the thoughts that were left behind him, and what were they which rose stronger and stronger before and within him ?

With Charles Welstead, the feelings with which he issued from the genial warmth of the abode of his devoted friends, the Frodshams, were those of a peculiar, affectionate thankfulness. Thankfulness to those two beings who had for years proved themselves the steadiest of friends, and who had never been tried in vain,—not even in this most important hour; and thankfulness to God who had given him those friends, and who made the sternest difficulties vanish like mere morning mists. He went back over his nearly three years' acquaintance with the Frodshams, and recalled, with grateful pleasure, the growing intercourse, and many pleasant hours and kindly offices that embellished it. But soon his thoughts took another direction; they flew to Barhead, and the form, and face, and tones, and sentiments of the noble and beautiful Clara, filled every region of his heart and understanding, and Walthamstow and its inmates glided away from remembrance.

But Harriet Frodsham — what were her thoughts? Did she retire to rest glad and happy in the essential service it was in the power of her father and herself to render to their friend? Happy and joyous she was, but it was not a happiness that accorded with sleep. She lay full of eager thoughts and speculations. The pros-

pect of going to Scartland ; the prospect of seeing, not only Charles's parents, but his nearest and fast friends, Frederica and Clara,—yes, Clara ; she of whose splendid beauty and lofty nature she had heard so much ; whose firm and stedfast affection she had so often been called on by Charles to admire ; whose beautiful and generous sentiments, eloquent in their truth and fervour, she had been so often permitted to listen to—to see her ! To talk of Charles Welstead to her ! There was a strange and absorbing fascination in it.

She lay and thought, and dreamed awake, till the very light dawned, and then she fell asleep and dreamed on. It was still of Scartland, Clara, and Charles ; but in and through all, Scartland and Charles were hers ; and Clara—there was a mystery and a change—she did not know how ; but now Clara was seen lofty and indignant,—then still and in tears,—and then again she stood pale and motionless as a ghost, and with large open blue eyes, in the aisle of a moonlight church.

There was a strain of music, strange and bird-like, as if a voice in the groves of some far Fairyland, sung of pain and passion, and woe, and the bearing away of a broken heart into the valleys of eternity. Harriet Frodsham started and

awoke; it was nearly noon. The sun streamed in warmly, and a thrush sate on a bough near her window, and sang with a vernal eloquence that had sunk and blended into her dream.

Could any one who knew the secret history of this night's cogitations and dreams, doubt for a moment what was the state of Harriet Frodsham's heart? Charles Welstead had been told, by herself, to call her sister, to regard her as a sister, to open his heart to her as a sister, and he could only tell that his feelings towards Harriet were those of the greatest attachment and affection, but far different to his passionate and absorbing affections for Clara. Clara had his heart's whole possession; Harriet, but that love and gratitude that he could and would have given to a dear sister. He went, therefore, along a safe and a pleasant path, and feared and felt no danger. He never forgot the warnings of Miss Jesse Boringdon, but the more he saw of Harriet Frodsham, the more they became a mystery to him, and so he told Miss Jesse. He assured her that he was not, could not be in danger of falling in love with Miss Frodsham. "I believe you," she replied, "and therefore, I now say, beware that she does not fall in love with you!"

At this idea Charles had laughed heartily. He had represented how unlikely that was, when

Miss Frodsham knew how his own sentiments stood; how entirely he had made her his confidant in the matter, and how generously and zealously she had ever sympathized with him.

That Miss Jesse Borringdon's words alluded to some unhappy attachment on the part of Miss Frodsham, he did indeed suspect. Miss Jesse nodded assent to this suggestion, but on that head she had never given him her confidence, and, of course, he had never sought to obtain it. He had, however, now so long seen Miss Frodsham in her most undisguised hours, and had so admired the calm domesticity of her temper and her habits—here over Miss Jesse's face passed a singular expression—that he felt as secure of exciting no sentiment in her heart to which he could not most fully respond, as he did of his own honesty of intention.

It was true that Charles had seen much of Miss Frodsham, but it was, still, chiefly in the peaceful happiness of her father's house, or in the gay circle of evening festivity, amongst their friends. In the one, she was the model of filial affection and disinterested friendship; in the other, she was as joyous as creature could be, for she was passionately fond of music and the dance. Clever she was, quick of perception, had much taste, and had vast research; and, if she did not

attract so much as some others by her personal charms, she won great admiration by her conversation. In this particular, Charles thought he discerned a feature of her character, that more than anything else took from it its charm. She had evidently no ordinary share of self-esteem, and pride of intellect and of accomplishment. There were other particulars, too, which had at one time startled him no little, but to which he had become gradually accustomed, and attributed to a certain simplicity and love of independence, a feature also of her father's character. She affected to treat many of the conventionalities of the world with contempt. She often said things that, to ordinary ears, were startling from the lips of a young, and especially an unmarried lady.

Having once established an intimate friendship with Charles, she treated him as a brother. She made no ceremony in asking him to go out shopping with her, or to accompany her home. In this respect her father acted with the same friendly, and as it were, family confidence. She would send to Charles's chambers to say that Miss Frodsham was in town, and would be glad of his company to this or that place; or to go home with her. At home she would take long walks or rides with him into the neighbouring forest, and, when any one rallied her on her suitor, she

would tell Charles of it, and laugh at the silly notions of people; while, to these silly people, as she termed them, she said with the utmost air of honest astonishment, "Really, you are very kind indeed to me, but I assure you that Mr. Westead would not thank you, for he is, and has long been engaged to one of the most beautiful and wealthy ladies of the north of England."

Yet, had any one seen these young friends strolling through the fields late of a summer's evening, returning from town; had they seen them pausing by stile and gate, in long and earnest conversation; had they seen them there, or in the garden walks at Walthamstow, sauntering in the dusk, arm-in-arm—they would have set them down as nothing short of lovers, and lovers acknowledged, and so understood and sanctioned by the family.

But this was that brotherly freedom which Harriet Frodsham had encouraged even while she talked with Charles of Clara, and of being one day their mutual friend and guest. The habit of familiarity had grown up by degrees, and had ceased to have anything strange in the eyes of the young people themselves.

For Harriet Frodsham, much allowance must, in these respects, be made. She was an only child; and not only so, but, from a very early

age had had no mother. Her mother was but a faint and dim memory with her. She had been the darling of her father, and indulged in all her wishes; and thus had come ultimately to see little in the gratification of her wishes but what was quite natural and right. Moreover, she had heard from her father peculiar opinions of the world, of morals, and of religion. There was a freedom, or latitude of mind, that had, from the father, grown up as nature itself with the daughter; and, while both father and daughter were as honest, in all situations, as people could be, their views and inclinations gave sanction to many things that others deemed often dubious and strange.

But still more, there was another phasis of Miss Frodsham's character which Charles Westead had not seen; for he had seen Harriet in no circumstances to call it forth. He thought he knew her intimately, thoroughly, entirely; but he knew her only by half. He knew her goodness, her kindness, her devotion to her friends, and to many a generous object. He knew her acuteness of intellect, her wit, and penetration of character; but he knew not that force of passion which slumbered beneath the calm circumstances of her ordinary life, as the fire of a volcano sleeps beneath the still olive woods and hanging vineyards of the south.

There is a species of self-delusion which strong passion practises, before it is roused to full action, like that which accompanies somnambulism. It walks with its eyes open, and sees, and thinks, but still dreams. Thus Harriet listened to Charles' conversation regarding Clara, and fancied, for she did not feign, that she glowed with the sympathies of friendship, while the real glow was love ; deep, intense, soul-pervading love. She saw, in the future, the union of her friends as a beautiful and poetical picture ; but still, the obstacles, the possibilities that lay across the way, the weight of circumstances that interposed, were the facts with which her heart dallied, and at its bottom, buried, but as with the transparent body of a stream, lay,—not Charles Welstead and Clara Borringdon, but Charles and Harriet Frodsham.

Had she never seen this ? Had she never been startled by the revelation ? She had,—but she only closed her eyes for a moment, and then went on in a wide-eyed blindness. The ancients called it, fate ; it is the fate of a passion-nurtured and indomitable will.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW SCENES, NEW CIRCUMSTANCES.

A FEW days brought news from the man of law, who had gone down to Scartland, that all was right. The statement of the circumstances of the property was quite correct; the investment was perfectly safe. He had discovered, too, the mystery which Mr. Frodsham, in his professional acumen, had instantly felt to exist. It was nothing more than this. The parties who had been sought to, to make the investment, were all from the same neighbourhood, and were soon made aware that Sir Thomas Borringdon, backed by other large landowners, had his eye on the property, and that a collision with him would lead to inevitable heart-burnings, and inconveniences of various kinds, and from various quarters. Hence, the constant retreat from the same.

Mr. Frodsham and Harriet now prepared for their journey. "Won't you go with us, Charles?" asked Mr. Frodsham. "Oh! how delightful! yes, you will go with us, Charles!" exclaimed Harriet. "How delicious to have you there; to traverse all that charming scenery with you as our guide. Oh yes, you *must* go."

But Charles had many reasons for not going down at that season; and he stood firm, and they went without him.

A few days saw Mr. and Miss Frodsham safely arrived at Scartland Manor. It were needless to say that such guests were welcome. The prospect of so agreeable a transfer of all his debts, had operated almost miraculously on old Marcus Welstead. He was again cheerful, hopeful, and even joyous and talkative. Great had been the preparation to receive these honoured guests with all possible respect and comfort. The constant kindness they had shewn to Charles, independent of their coming as a sort of redeeming angels out of a great perplexity, made them, of all others, sure of a most cordial and even affectionate reception. The very grass in the shrubbery and garden was mown; for Charles had sent them word how particular the Frodshams were in this respect, how exactly *their* lawns were like velvet; and, though Scartland

could not all at once be smoothed down to the polish of Walthamstow, it exhibited a far different aspect to what it did when David Borringdon made his first visit there.

Mr. Frodsham, confined for a great part of the year to the drudgery of his great practice in London, was gladsome as a boy in the delicious weather of the spring, and the quiet freshness of the country. He was in a mood to admire everything. The country seemed to grow more beautiful the farther he went; the people to get, in his eyes, more frank and open-hearted. He found everybody very agreeable, and he made himself so. He could not sufficiently express his admiration of the position of Scartland Manor, and of the estate which surrounded it. The stately quiet of the large, old-fashioned house; the rushing stream at the bottom of the garden, the green uplands, the old, shadowy woods; the large old garden, and still summer-house,—everything had a charm to him, that nobody could feel who had not first passed through the long, dreary purgatory of a London professional treadmill.

Marcus rode daily in different directions with him, through the woods, over the moorlands, and amongst the collieries and iron-mines, and works of the neighbourhood. Often they were also

accompanied by Harriet, on horseback, and sometimes by George, who paid both Mr. Frodsham and Harriet great respect. George was a still, shrewd, money-loving man, and he felt, in all its worldly value, the friendship of the Frodshams. Mr. Frodsham was wonderfully taken with old Jacob Scantlebury. He was highly amused at his piebald scriptural quotations, which he related to Harriet with great gusto; and thought him such a trusty, old-fashioned, respectable sort of a servant.

Mr. Frodsham and Marcus had soon gone sufficiently into the particulars of the value of the estate, and of the claims on it, assisted by George. Mr. Frodsham said it would have been a pity, above all pities, if this fine old estate had been really in any danger of falling into the hands of the Philistines; but of this there was assuredly no chance. George, he perceived, was a careful, assiduous, and managing man; and he soon made it evident that it would require no very great number of years totally to clear the whole property. Mr. Frodsham agreed to have all the debts included in one mortgage; that to Sir Thomas, on the payment of the money, being cancelled.

These matters arranged, Marcus could not devote himself sufficiently to the entertainment

of his guests. Mr. Frodsham often spent many hours with him in his summer-house, where, of course, his uncle's collection of noses was duly exhibited, and the anecdotes relating to them told. Parties were made, and excursions planned, and above all, Mr. Welstead made a journey to Sheffield with his new friend Frodsham, where, by his acquaintance with some of the principal manufacturers, he showed him, much to his delight, the wide and most interesting variety of manufactures there going on.

In the mean time, Harriet was not the less actively engaged. At Scartland, at Barhead, where, notwithstanding Sir Thomas's private vexation that Mr. Frodsham had so completely caught the Manor of Scartland out of his hands, yet, as the friend and legal adviser of Miss Jesse Borringdon, and as a man of well-known character and wealth, Mr. Frodsham, with his daughter, was most politely received. Everywhere Miss Harriet Frodsham was pronounced to be "a most lively young lady." In fact, those who had seen her only in the quiet disposition of her own quiet home, would have now contemplated her with great surprise. A new spirit seemed to actuate her; a new temperament to have entered into her. She was in constant and untiring motion. It was as if the northern air

had a species of intoxicating power in it for her, and that every new object proclaimed an additional excitement. With Mrs. Welstead she entered into a sort of instantaneous and ardent intimacy. "Oh, my dear Mrs. Welstead!" she exclaimed the moment she issued from the carriage at the door of Scartland Manor, on their arrival,—“how well I do know you! You seem to me rather a dear mother than a stranger; so often have Charles and I talked of you;” and she embraced and kissed Mrs. Welstead with enthusiasm. Mrs. Welstead, though somewhat surprised and overpowered by so sudden a display of affection, was nevertheless greatly charmed, nor was Marcus less so.

“What excellent, kind, cordial-spirited creatures are our new friends, both father and daughter!” said he. “Well, it *is* a peculiar favour of Providence that we have become acquainted with them. Such kindness as they have always shown to Charles. It is really very, very good of them, and we must do all we can to make their stay agreeable.”

Miss Frodsham was equally alert, friendly, and communicative at Barhead. Clara and Frederica were naturally anxious to know her, and to hear her talk of Charles. Lady Borringdon was not the less anxious, from other

motives, to hear Miss Frodsham's remarks; and by both parties was she very kindly received, and to both did she talk a great deal.

With Mrs. Welstead she put herself, as it were, at once on the footing of a daughter. She went with her, and saw her give all her domestic orders. She sate and worked with her, and her conversation was of Charles. No subject could be more welcome to Mrs. Welstead; and Miss Frodsham not only related much of the progress of their friendship with him, but was inquisitive to know all that his mother could tell her of his earlier life. Grateful was this conversation to Mrs. Welstead, and much she rejoiced in the warm attachment the Frodshams exhibited for her son; yet, somehow or other, there was, ever and anon, a sentiment uttered by Miss Frodsham which jarred, she did not know well why, on her mind. There was a kind of claiming of Charles, as if he almost belonged to their family. Mrs. Welstead began to entertain a secret anxiety. She let in a fear of she did not know what. Miss Frodsham really did seem very fond of Charles, but then she knew of his attachment to Clara Borringdon,—she could not entertain any hopes of a tender nature herself. It was but the effect of long association.

But many days had not gone over, when Miss Frodsham opened one morning, over their sewing, a regular conversation on Charles and Clara's engagement.

"You never expect, dear Mrs. Welstead, do you, that they will ever be really married?"

"Never expect it? Good heavens! to be sure I do! Why should I not?"

"Oh, why should you? Her family seem so utterly opposed to it; and Clara is too high-minded to marry in opposition to her father's wishes. What then do you really look for?"

"Gracious goodness! Miss Frodsham, how you talk! What do I look for? I look for nothing. I leave all to time."

"Oh! dear Mrs. Welstead, you must expect something definite. There must be a termination of their attachment one way or another."

"Well—well, let us leave all that; let us leave it to Providence to order."

"Yes, but, dear Mrs. Welstead, this is only a sort of self-delusion. You really, as a sensible woman, must look for some actual result. It is as well to look a thing fairly in the face; and what *can* you look for under such circumstances? While Sir Thomas lives, they never can marry;

he may live many, many years, and you surely would not wish him dead in order that your son and Clara might be united?"

"Oh, dear Miss Frodsham, how you do startle and shock me! you quite make me tremble; I do not know what to say; I wish to leave it."

"Yes," said Miss Frodsham, "to leave the subject, that is very easy; but to see how the matter is to end, that is a very different thing; and you must have some conclusion on the subject."

"Conclusion! there can be no conclusion at present. Things may occur."

"Things may occur! yes, my dear Mrs. Westead, you hope some day that old Sir Thomas will die off, and then the way is clear. Now, for my part, it seems shocking to live on such a hope. And I think Sir Thomas looks *very* likely to live long, and I do candidly avow *my* opinion, that I think Charles will never have Clara."

"You don't! good life! you don't! Oh, Miss Frodsham, what do you mean? Does Charles say so? Oh, no; never were young people so fond of one another as he and Clara. I believe nothing but death would break their engagement."

"Oh, a thousand things besides," said Harriet, who seemed resolved to rush on at all ha-

zards, with her own positive opinions. "Dear Mrs. Welstead, you talk like a good dear creature, who lives out of the world and its ways. You'll see. I know something of life. Your son will get on; old Sir Thomas will still live on; and, some fine day or other, Charles will say, 'Well, this romance of love has lasted long enough; let the stiff and stout old Nabob continue his obstinacy as long as he pleases;' and he is off, and is married to some clever wealthy wife or other."

"No, no, Miss Frodsham; you may know the world, but if you think this, you do not know Charles; he is not that sort of man."

"Oh, dear Mrs. Welstead, **do** you think I don't know Charles as well or better than you do? Ay, trust me, I know him through and through. We understand each other."

"What, in Heaven's name! understand each other! There is no understanding; you don't mean to say—?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed out Harriet Frodsham; "I mean nothing more than that I know Charles so well; and all the world knows the nature of this sort of affair so well."

Mrs. Welstead was silent; but from that moment there was a painful anxiety in her mind. She had heard the opinions of Harriet Frod-

sham with surprise, and a sort of horror. They appeared to her selfish, slippery, and unprincipled. That she would be glad, spite of Charles's ardent attachment to Clara Borringdon, to obtain him herself, she had no doubt. That Charles was on the most intimate footing with her and her father, and that not only were there great obstacles to the prosecution of the connexion with Miss Borringdon, but also great facility, every facility, for an interested one with Miss Frodsham, was quite as apparent. There were great wealth, an evident disposition to secure him, nay, a counting upon it, her woman's instinct told her clearly; and now, this great obligation to the father. It was a position of things which struck on her with a cold sort of terror. Her heart closed, at least in its communicativeness, towards Miss Frodsham; and a fair politeness took the place of its former warm regard for her supposed virtues and kindness. "Ah!" sighed Mrs. Welstead, "how rarely are those great and outwardly shining instances of generous friendship based on the foundation they profess to have! Oh, how ready are people to serve others, when they want to serve themselves!"

Mrs. Welstead now came to look on the whole as a scheme on the part of Miss Frodsham, if not of the father. She looked on Harriet as an in-

triguing, selfish, and most dangerous woman. The happiness of the release from the fetters of Sir Thomas was spoiled to her. She saw themselves only in the hands of those who might become still more dangerous to them. There was trouble, she again felt, before them.

From this moment, she lost no opportunity of dwelling on the high sense of honour in Charles's character; on the equally lofty and devoted nature of Clara; and added, that she could well imagine the death or loss of one being the death of the other; but that there could be a change of affection in either, she could no more believe than that snow could burn.

To which class of opinions Miss Frodsham would reply by exclaiming, "Oh, dear Mrs. Welstead, how you do want to see a little of the modern world! What romantic school were you ever educated in! Such notions one never meets with now-a-days, except in novels."

Harriet Frodsham felt that, in the mind of Mrs. Welstead, she had struck upon a rock. She had ventured out in her inquiries and opinions rashly, and beyond the usually sensible tone of her wont; but, as if inspired by it with a spirit of combativeness, she made no effort to regain, by concession, the ground she had lost, but carried her discovery of the internal feeling of Mrs.

Welstead towards her with a gay levity. She did not profess the slightest diminution of affection for her, but from that time she flew more eagerly and often to Barhead House.

Clara and Frederica had hailed the arrival of Harriet Frodsham with delight. They knew what staunch and familiar friends the Frodshams had been to Charles, and they were enraptured at the prospect of talking over with Miss Frodsham that acquaintanceship with him, and learning much concerning his life amongst them. But the progress of their conversations was very similar to those of Mrs. Welstead and Harriet. There was a sort of assumption of Charles as belonging to them, which, though not said in direct terms, struck upon the inner sense of the sisters most unwelcomely. She told them how she had longed to make their acquaintance, from all that Charles had told her of them; "and Charles, you know," she added, "tells me everything."

"Everything?" said Frederica, with evident surprise.

"To be sure! We are so very, very familiar, you know. Charles Welstead is quite one of our family;"—and then she talked of all their long strolls together; their walks home from town in the evenings; their pleasant, familiar evenings at home.

A pale hue stole over the beautiful face of Clara; but a flush as of indignation rose into that of Frederica. Lady Borringdon joined them, and Miss Frodsham, with great vivacity, talked with her of town, of literature, music, the theatres, the Opera, the fine arts, and a thousand such things, in which she had great tact and no trivial taste; and which gave a great impression of her cleverness, and the vast amount of her acquirements in polite and social knowledge.

Scarcely was she gone, when Frederica, rising and walking across the room, said, "Can this be Harriet Frodsham? The kind and intimate friend of Charles Welstead? Oh! the vain creature! But Clara, dear Clara! you are hurt! you look quite ill. Surely you do not mind the silly nonsense of this prating girl?"

"No, dear Frederica, I am only thinking how dull we poor country girls, as we are really become, must appear, beside this keen, active, and accomplished woman of London."

"Woman of London! ay, there, dearest Clara, you have just expressed what I wanted to express in vain. She is the vain, knowing woman of London, who—"

"Yes, Frederica, but how is it that Charles Welstead can be at once so attached to Miss Frodsham, and to—"

“ And to you, you would say. Oh, plague on the girl! *She* oust you, dear Clara? How can you compare yourself with her? You, the clear and beautiful heaven, shining in serene magnificence, and a London tea-garden, lit with lamps for the populace. Ha! ha! ha! Oh! ’tis great folly; but I can tell you why Charles likes these people; it is because they are fond of him, and have been very kind to him, and made him very much at home; and so he must be inclined to overlook a great—ay, a great deal of vanity, and city pride, and selfish love of showing off. Gracious me! Harriet Frodsham the sisterly friend of Charles Welstead! Hem, hem!”

From that hour, Frederica conceived a violent disgust to Harriet. Clara was still, pale, and thoughtful; nay, Frederica thought, once or twice, that she observed traces of tears on her face. The behaviour of the sisters to Miss Frodsham grew stiff and distant; but not so that of Lady Borringdon.

Lady Borringdon was at once mightily taken with Harriet Frodsham, and Harriet was apparently as much pleased with her. A great league of friendship was struck up between them. Lady Borringdon invited Miss Frodsham and her father to dine at Barhead almost every day. She made parties for them, and it was attributed

to the Borringdons as a great proof of magnanimity and superiority to all petty jealousies, that they thus received and fêted the very people who had come to snatch Scartland from them. Lady Borringdon introduced her young friend, Miss Frodsham, to all her acquaintance ; and down at Scartland it was noticed, that Miss Frodsham uttered almost in every sentence with an emphasis of evident pride, the words, " My friend Lady Borringdon." Lady Borringdon could not call and take up Harriet on her drives, but she begged her to give her the pleasure of her company in them, and Harriet ascended, almost every forenoon, the hill towards Barhead with an agility and an eagerness which betrayed the feeling with which she sought the society of her new friend.

In those drives, it was said, Jack Danvers often met them, as if by accident, and had been seen to fling the reins of his horse to his groom, ascend the carriage, and accompany them for miles. Nay, he would take upon him the office of cicerone to the wild and lovely scenery of the neighbourhood. In large evening parties, it was observed that he was particularly attentive to the younger lady. He mustered up all his stock of cut-and-dried poetical sentiment, and appeared very successful in his effect upon her. It was whispered that Jack Danvers would now

give up his long, obstinate pursuit of Clara Borringdon, in favour of the clever Miss Frodsham.

This, if true, threatened again great trouble to Scartland and its inhabitants; but such were not the views of either Jack Danvers or Lady Borringdon. They beheld in Miss Frodsham a very probable rival to Clara, but not in the affections of the fox-hunting, pseudo-sentimental Danvers. If they could succeed in diverting the pursuit of Charles Welstead from Clara to Harriet Frodsham, they would consider it a grand point gained. Lady Borringdon soon assured herself that no obstacle would exist on the part of Miss Frodsham, and her utmost powers of persuasion and flattery were now exerted to engage her, heart and soul, in the captivation of Charles Welstead. She represented to her what a blessing it would confer on their family if she could secure that point. The obstinacy of Clara would be at once at an end, she would consent to another alliance, and certainly to that of the noble Danvers, a man so handsome, so wealthy, so very worthy of her; a man who so greatly admired the sense and talents of Miss Frodsham! The arts and flatteries of Danvers himself were exerted with equal zeal; but how little of eloquence is needed to persuade, where the heart already runs on before! A beautiful vision arose in the

mind of Harriet Frodsham of being one day the mistress of Scartland Manor, with all those fine old fields and woods.

But could this be the same kind and quiet Harriet Frodsham of Walthamstow? Not exactly. It was the Harriet Frodsham of Scartland and Barhead, and their inspiration and excitements. It was the same being, indeed, only now exhibiting, under a different class of circumstances, a different phasis of her character.

A number of novel and powerful causes were operating upon her, and under their stimulus her passions shot up, as in a single spring day, from beneath the cool and veiling earth, into full leaf and flower. Instead of domestic quiet, filial piety, affectionate kindness, and a certain warm generosity, there now ruled in her, and in all her actions, vanity,—gross, enormous vanity; a passion for display; for the display of her cleverness, her wit, her knowledge, her accomplishments. Everywhere, in the most brilliant parties, she was seen, the most splendidly dressed, and the greatest of talkers. Ladies far handsomer were neglected by young gentlemen to crowd around the clever, witty Miss Harriet Frodsham, whom Lady Borringdon and Jack Danvers declared to be the most brilliant and accomplished, as well as most wealthy young lady, that had

appeared in that neighbourhood for years. That class of young gentlemen who cram themselves with the *on dits* of newspapers and journals, and handbooks of etiquette, on the passing matters of high life, and of the fine arts and literature, and often astonish the artists, the *élite* of fashion, and authors themselves, by the outpourings of their singular gleanings, gathered round Harriet as a most perfect oracle on all these matters, and her remarks and opinions were soon quoted far and wide in family circles and parties, and imbibed by good and innocent souls, who had only or chiefly dwelt in the country, as most authentic and brilliant intelligence.

The passion which had grown, in a sort of half disguise, in her soul for years, now stood forth to her own view, not only in all its greatness, but self-justified. It was to heal family breaches; to promote the most desirable alliances; to put an end to many follies, and much silly rumour. Ambition, the ambition of being the courted and wealthy mistress of Scartland, with the handsome, and, as he was sure to be, distinguished lawyer, Charles Welstead, for her husband. There was a prominence in this, so far beyond the sober respectability of the position of the lawyer's daughter of Walthamstow, and amongst a crush of such well-to-do people in the

mass of enormous London, that was not a little seducing and intoxicating. There, she was, however respectable, undistinguished,—here, at once, she shot forth amid far more elevated and aristocratic people, as one of the most elevated amongst them. Vanity whispered, because the more intelligent and accomplished people were better able to perceive and estimate her merits. The Borringdons and Danvers, and many of the old county families, would be her friends; and it is not to be wondered that all these considerations took an immense hold upon her. The cold and offended pride of Clara and Frederica, too, had piqued her; and revenge, calling itself just resentment, rose hot and keen within her, and assumed a shape of generous and deserved scorn.

Ah! to what lengths can even a gentle spirit go; and what awful forms can our nature put on, when there is a strong root of passion in the heart! When the prophet of Israel announced to the captain of Syria that one day he should slay his master, the king, and take his place, committing all species of barbarities, the yet uncorrupted man, the man yet unconscious of the growth of the murder-spirit within him, exclaimed, “Is thy servant a dog, that he shall do these things?” And yet he did them: and how many are the men and women, too, who have

passed through life in peace, tranquillity, and love, who would have been equally astonished at such a prophetic announcement, and yet would have verified it, had they fallen into the swelling surge of ambitious circumstances!

During the course of this visit to Scartland, Miss Frodsham did not allow many days to elapse without a letter to Charles Welstead. The first which he received filled him with the highest and most unmeasured delight. He saw his native place, his native haunts, his home, his mother, his venerable father, all depicted, and that by the hand of a dear friend, in such colours as made his heart throb, and his eyes fill with tears. He more than half regretted that he had not gone down and enjoyed the inexpressible pleasure of participating in the delight of his native home and his dearest friends. But, as the correspondence went on, there was a change, a tone, a spirit—he did not know what, that he did not like. True, she expressed increasing delight in the scenery, increasing affection for his parents; but with these was mixed up a strange egotism, a constant protrusion of self,—of the attentions, the triumphs she received. There was a vaunting talk of “my dear friend Lady Borringdon;” of the great and noble people she had met; nay, she even lauded Jack Danvers.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Charles to himself; "is Harriet so weak as to be won over by these designing people?" He wrote and stated his extreme astonishment; but it only brought a warm defence of her new friends, and her wonder that Charles had not seen what charming people they were. Nothing could be kinder, more truly well-bred or well-informed. Of Clara and Frederica there was little or no mention. There was, too, at times a word of praise for George, his brother. George had ridden out with her here and there. He had shown her the scenes that *he, Charles*, was fond of. "He is," said Harriet, a still, but a very staid and sensible, and, I am glad to add, most agreeable man, when you get to know him."

What was there in this that ought to have awoken an unpleasant feeling in Charles's heart? He had not, it is true, found George, particularly of late, very kind or very agreeable; but still, he was his brother; he might be improved in his temper now the pressure of difficulty was likely to be removed from the estate, and he ought, he thought, to rejoice in his praise; but from Harriet, he could not tell why, he did not. He began seriously to question and explore his own heart and thoughts. He accused himself of being envious, jealous, and that most selfishly

jealous, for why should not Harriet like, and praise, and even *love*, others beside himself—himself so bound up in the love of another? He was sad and unhappy; and, in the midst of this mood, the Frodshams returned home.

CHAPTER XV.

STARTLING REVELATIONS.

CHARLES WELSTEAD, on the receipt of a note from Harriet Frodsham, informing him of their return, posted that very evening to Walthamstow. The first man that he encountered on entering the coach was Mr. Frodsham himself. Their meeting was most cordial. Their only fellow-passenger was an old deaf woman, and they, therefore, plunged into an unrestrained conversation about the Frodshams' journey to the north,—Scartland, Barhead, and everything. Mr. Frodsham was quite enthusiastic about both place and people. Old Marcus Welstead was in his eyes the perfect specimen of a country gentleman—so frank, so candid, so cheerful, and so well informed. Mrs. Welstead was a genuine lady, a genuine Englishwoman—a mo-

ther to the whole of her neighbourhood. Of course Charles agreed in every one of these particulars, and felt most happy and thankful that all had turned out so well, and that his father and mother had made so good an impression on so good and useful a person as Mr. Frodsham. When they got to the stile leading across the Clapton meadows, Mr. Frodsham proposed that they should leave the coach, and walk over the fields.

“ Since I have breathed your fresh northern air, Charles,” he said, “ I really seem as if I could not get fresh air enough.”

They went across the fields in full talk on the same agreeable subject, and were speedily at Mr. Frodsham’s gate.

Charles’s reception by Harriet was equally enthusiastic. She had never enjoyed life before, she said ; and over dinner the whole topic was discussed, and Scartland and its neighbourhood, neighbours and people, were equally retraced. Charles had a thousand questions to ask, which brought the scenery and inhabitants into review in a multitude of different lights ; and it was a new and peculiarly delicious feeling to him to see what was so familiar to him, now so well known and so much admired by his friends. There were, however, some particulars on which

their feelings were by no means in unison. Harriet could not conceive how it was that Charles had such a prejudice against Lady Borringdon, except that she was not favourable to his suit to Clara,—and Charles could not conceive how it was possible that Harriet could see anything to admire in Jack Danvers, Dick Mellor, and the class of people with whom they associated. On this head, they grew actually into a warm altercation, which Mr. Frodsham put an end to with one of his quiet smiles and observations.

“Don’t quarrel about these people. I dare say they are all very well in their way. But we all see things differently from different points of view. Charles thinks they are no friends of his, and he does not like them. They were very kind to you, Harriet, and you do like them. Very natural in both cases. Now I, for my part, see them from *another* point of view ; and it seems to me that Jack Danvers is a fine, rough, country, fox-hunting squire, but has his good and his bad side ; and Dick Mellor is just a diminutive shadow of Jack—blackier, and less handsome, and as distorted as shadows often are. But as to the Borringdons, I confess that, spite of their being the relatives of that excellent creature, Miss Jesse, they are not my sort of

people; they are too proud and starch. Old Sir Thomas has swallowed a snow-ball some time, or an ice to cool his Indian heart, and it has neither melted nor digested, but lies in all its chill in his stomach yet. Lady Borringdon is a fine, dashing, dare-devil woman, but I had rather have her for a friend than an enemy; and as to the two young ladies, why, excuse me Charles, I know I am now treading on tender ground, but I give you *my* impression,—they are very beautiful, very, indeed, but they have too much of Sir Thomas about them to my taste.”

“Right, papa—that is just *my* opinion of them; handsome they are, but proud as Lucifer.”

“Oh, you did not see enough of them,” exclaimed Charles with a sense of wounded feeling, that showed itself in his countenance, and on his flushed and angry brow. “You should have seen them often, and you would and *must* have liked them. You did not ——”

“No doubt! no doubt!” interrupted Mr. Frodsham, who saw that there was not likely to be much unity of opinion on this point; “no doubt you, Charles, are the best judge, and best acquainted with the real characters of the young ladies. Harriet and I were certainly not there under the most favourable circumstances for judging of any of the Borringdons; we were in

a position of hostility to a certain degree, by our connexion with Scartland."

"But Lady Borringdon, dear papa, shewed no hostile feeling; and does not that prove that she is a very superior woman?"

"I grant it,—a very superior woman is Lady Borringdon, in her way; but let us at present leave the Borringdons out of the question,—let us talk of Scartland, that is the place, and those are the people for me."

The bitterness which seemed growing rapidly in the hearts of Charles and Harriet, at least, seemed at once mitigated by this remark. A light, as of sunshine, again spread over Charles's countenance. Harriet smiled, and a long and pleasant talk on many things connected with this important visit, brought on bedtime. When Mr. Frodsham had taken his candle, Harriet drew aside the blind, and said—"Oh, what a splendid night! What a moon! Dear Charles, do but have one walk round the garden, and hear the nightingales. *Those* you do *not* hear at Scartland; *that* advantage we have at least here."

She threw on a thick shawl, and, opening one of the French windows, they walked out upon the lawn. As they slowly strolled through the beautiful grounds, or sate in the retired summer-

house, with the full moon sailing high opposite to them in the clear heavens, and three or four nightingales sung with poetic zeal and rivalry against each other, Charles found Harriet again all her quiet, simple, affectionate self. She seemed to steer clear of every subject that could stir a jarring thought. Her mind seemed to be led solely by her heart, and she recalled the three years during which they had enjoyed each other's acquaintance with a feeling of peculiarly grateful pleasure; and expressed her thankfulness that it had made her not only acquainted with him, but with his family and friends. In the joy of his heart, Charles kissed her affectionately, and, after returning to the house, as they parted at the top of the stairs, he said to himself, "Well, thank Heaven! Harriet is herself again! She will soon forget Lady Borringdon and her plotting acquaintance, and we shall be as good friends as ever."

The next morning, he was up and returned to town before breakfast, as he was preparing to take his examination preparatory to his call to the bar. As he entered his chamber, the first object which attracted his attention was a letter in the handwriting of Frederica Borringdon. Somewhat startled, for Frederica rarely wrote to him but when something of importance had

occurred, he opened it, and read with a strange surprise.

Frederica began by telling Charles that he knew well her warm and impatient feelings, and that it was under the influence of those that she wrote. "I know," said she, "that what I hear is false,—false as sin, and I want you at once to contradict it. Lady Borringdon says, that you are fully and explicitly engaged to Miss Harriet Frodsham. She has it, she says, from Miss Frodsham herself. She asserts this everywhere, to us, to Clara, to every one she comes near. 'It is quite natural,' she adds; 'they are old friends; and has not Mr. Frodsham advanced an enormous sum on the old man's estate, quite as much as it is worth, to save the family, or rather, to secure a good and ancient estate for his daughter?'"

"*Can* Miss Frodsham have said such a thing? *Can* she have acquiesced in it when suggested to her? I do not for a moment believe it, for I think her too shrewd; and if I did, I must also renounce all my knowledge and opinion of you. Clara does not believe it. Oh no! she is too secure in the sense of your truth; but I see that it annoys her, and it must be set right at once. She must not be tortured for a moment longer.

Write and tell me that it is what I am as certain of as my life—that it is false ! ”

Charles sate down and wrote in the glow of virtuous indignation, “ It is false ! Harriet Frodsham never did say it,—never could say it,—and never would say it. Ask her yourself, Frederica, and let her answer be laid at once before Lady Borringdon.”

More he wrote, in the fervour of his indignant feelings, and then he added a letter, overflowing with love and sympathy, to Clara.

Having dispatched these letters, he turned to prepare for his examination, which took place the next day ; and this anxious and important affair, on which so much depended, tended to make him, to a certain degree, forget this cause of extreme excitement ; which, however, through the whole, kept ever and anon arising with a feeling of heart-soreness from beneath the superincumbent weight of present care. But his way had been admirably prepared by his zealous study, and by the kind exertions of his friends, Serjeant Torrent and Mr. Frodsham. He was astonished at the ease with which he went through his examination, and he found himself, as it were in a dream, at once admitted to the membership of the bar, the career of an

honourable profession open to him, and that amid the commendations of his examiners and the congratulations of his friends.

During the engrossment of this great crisis in his life, several days had passed by in a happy but hurrying confusion ; and it was not till awaking late one morning, after a feverish night, subsequent to a dinner which some of his successful fellow candidates and himself had had together, to celebrate their good fortune, and which Serjeant Torrent, Mr. Frodsham, and a number of others of their elder friends had done them the honour to attend, that he found a second letter from Frederica Borringdon.

“ Frederica,” said he, opening it, “ writes me, good zealous girl, that she has stopped the mouth of falsehood, I doubt not. Yes—it is so, for here is indorsed a letter from Harriet Frodsham to her. Frederica lets no grass grow under her feet. Brave, warm-hearted girl! how proud shall I one day be to call her sister. But what is this?” added he, turning grave. “ These are long epistles—that does not look well. Why so many words in a question and a reply?”

He sate down, and growing more serious, read on, and on. He now became pale as ashes; now red and hot as flame. He turned first to one letter and then to the other. It was evident

that what he read filled him with the utmost astonishment, and with no less torture. When at length he seemed to have made his final perusal, he arose, exclaiming as it were inwardly, "Good God!" and walked to and fro in a state of frenzy. And well might he wonder and groan under the contents of these letters. That of Frederica expressed the shock of astonishment which the inclosed one had given them. She had written to Miss Frodsham, as Charles had suggested, not for a moment doubting of the nature of the reply, and desirous of giving the most triumphant refutation to Lady Borringdon's assertion. That reply was as follows :

" TO MISS FREDERICA BORRINGDON.

" DEAR MISS FREDERICA.—You ask me to deny that Mr. Charles Welstead is under any engagements of a tender nature to me. You express yourself quite confident that I shall do it at once and with pleasure. I shall *never* deny it! No! Charles Welstead is mine! Mine by a thousand vows, a thousand ties, a thousand acts of devoted affection; and a long intercourse of endearing confidence. What! shall I resign the man that I love, and have loved for years, with the cognizance and approval of my father, out of a romantic concession to a romantic, but hopeless

passion on the part of your sister? Miss Frederica, you should know the world something better than to put such a childish question to me. I care not what Charles Welstead may say or have said, to avoid scenes, and to make his way easy through the world,—he is a lawyer, but *I* will act with no duplicity; I owe you or yours nothing. I made no scruple to tell you when I was with you, and that haughty beauty, your sister, that Charles Welstead was mine, had long been mine, or rather ours, for he had been the adopted and admitted inmate of our house for years; and I tell you now, once for all, that before the whole world I will claim him as mine—proclaim him as mine, and nothing shall snatch him from me—but death.

“Your cold and lofty sister may have been the passion of Charles Welstead’s days of boyish romance,—men love to remember and believe in such romance,—but I am his chosen one in the long-tried course of actual practical existence; and when it is put to the test, we shall see the romance vanish like a meteor of a summer’s night; but the mature attachment remain steady as the dawn of a long summer’s day.

“And Charles referred you to me! He bade you ask me! That is beautiful. He knew what I should say, and he wanted you to have it from

my lips. Here then, Miss Frederica, you have it, in all its naked but eternal truth.

“Yours, &c.

“HARRIET FRODSHAM.”

Charles could not believe his eyes,—his senses. He fairly reeled with a dizziness of astonishment. A cold, deadly feeling, as if he were walking on hollow ground, came over him. A sickness, an intense recollection of the warning words of Miss Jesse Borringdon; and, as he stood clasping his forehead with his closed hands, and gazing wildly into vacancy, his mind went back over all the long, familiar intercourse with the Frodsams. The constant and growing partiality evinced for him, both by father and daughter; the readiness of Mr. Frodsham to serve him; a thousand things and words flashed upon him, and he asked himself, with an indescribable agony of feeling,—Can it be? Have I deceived them? Have I acted as a lover? Have I concealed the true state of my affections and my hopes? No! no! never. I have always declared to Harriet my unalterable attachment to Clara. She cannot have mistaken me! And yet she talks of a romantic passion—of a boyish illusion! Good heaven!—how can it be? How can she have deceived herself? How can

she have misunderstood my conduct?—my conduct?" He was silent. He stood, and thought deeply; and, as he thought, his eyes grew wilder, and his face more ghastly.

Suddenly he again snatched up Frederica's letter, and when he read there of the blow it had given to Clara, of her deep, silent, but terrible suffering, he snatched up his hat, and rushed out.

In a few seconds he was in a cab, and driving at a furious rate on the way to Walthamstow. It was about one o'clock as he entered the grounds of Mr. Frodsham. He inquired of the woman at the lodge if Miss Frodsham was at home. She was, and he hurried up the walk towards the house. As he came in sight of it, he saw Miss Frodsham leaning from the window of her little room, where she sate often at her work in summer. She seemed in a profound reverie; but, as she caught the sound of his rapid steps, and then saw him advancing with his wild and ghastly expression of countenance, she turned also deadly pale, and drew back from the window.

Charles entered without ceremony, for the front door stood open; it was a glorious June day, and he ascended rapidly the stairs, and in

another moment stood in Harriet Frodsham's room.

She had flung herself down upon the sofa, and lay covering her face with her hands. He saw that she trembled,—his own heart beat audibly, and with a hammer-like and choking violence ; and he stood for some time in the centre of the room, trembling from head to foot, with the open letters in his shaking hands.

At length, he exclaimed, in a bitter and husky voice, and with a desperate effort,—“ Miss Frodsham ! what is this ? What *does* this mean ? ”

In an instant Harriet Frodsham was on her feet, and stood before him, pale, trembling ; her hand pressed on her throbbing heart, and her lips white as ashes. But there was a fire in her eye which told that there was strength gathering within her ; and she said, with a firmness that would have amazed a bystander, had there been one,—

“ Need you ask me, Charles ? I see that you have my letter, and Frederica Borringdon's, in your hand. I know your errand,—I have expected it. I am glad you are come. What is that, do you say ? It is the truth ! It is the declaration of that love with which you have inspired me ;—a love stronger than death,

stronger than shame, stronger than any power or consideration on earth. I love you, Charles, ay, more than I love life, or happiness, or aught beside ! I love you with that passion which is greater, and stronger, and more desperate than fate—which has no supreme in might except the Divinity, who implanted it in woman's bosom. It is that passion for which Juliet, and Desdemona, and Ophelia, and Cleopatra, lived and died—and for it I will live or die !

“ And will you tell me, Charles Welstead, that you do not know this ?—that you have not long known it ? Will you *pretend* that you could not, and did not, feel this in all the love that has received you and cherished you here for all these years ? Will you dare to say that no suspicion of this ever suggested itself to you when my arms encircled you, when my kisses burned on your lips, when I flew to meet you as you approached, when I wandered by your side in the summer days in the forest, and in the summer night in these gardens ? Oh, do not sully that truth—do not make me doubt that sincerity which I have always esteemed in you, by saying, but for once, that you did not know why, not only I but my father, were so devoted to you ? Is this mere friendship ? Do you know so little

of this world yet as to find any likeness between *this* love, and its warmest friendship?"

As she proceeded, the tremor, the pallor, the painful beating of the heart were gone. She stood firm, taller; there was a glow on her cheek as of the richest rose; the fire in her eyes burned brighter, more intensely. It became liquid, triumphant, and eloquent. She looked at once beautiful, imperious, and even terrible. Before she paused, Charles had in his turn, sunk into a chair, covered his eyes and his forehead with his tightly-clasped hands, and groaned audibly.

There was a pause of some duration. The silence was profound. Harriet Frodsham stood and gazed on the man whom she seemed to have stunned with her words as with thunder, with a deepening, beaming, triumphant smile, as if she felt that the victory was over, and he was hers. At length, she stepped up to him, laid her fingers on his shoulder, and said, in an altered and a softened tone:—

"Charles! be yourself. You have not deceived me,—cannot deceive me now. It is not that you do not love me, but that you are prouder of the beauty of Clara Borringdon than of the devotion of Harriet Frodsham. Your fancy fascinates you by the illusions of memory, but

my love and devotion will make you forget all that. It is but a struggle, and it is over. You know that you are mine, that you have long been mine. Fate wills it, and fate is stronger than me."

It was now Charles's turn to spring up. He arose to his feet, and looked her in the face; but with what an expression was it that he did so? The anguish and deathly pallor of that countenance, in which pain and despair were written in stronger lines than those of "an iron pen and lead in a rock," would have smitten with remorse any torturer except that of fierce and desperate passion.

"Harriet!" he said at length; "I ask you again, what *does* this mean? Can you possibly so far have misunderstood me? Have I ever addressed the language of passion to you? Have I not always, always, from the first days of our acquaintance, made you the confidante of my only, my unalterable attachment to Clara? And is it from *you*, that this comes? Oh Heaven! will you in some sudden, some unaccountable fit of madness, destroy the peace of us all for ever? What has Clara ever done to you, that you would take this dreadful revenge upon her?"

"Silence! Charles Welstead! What is Clara Borringdon to me? or to you either? You know

well, if you will let your sense and experience exert their proper sway, that Clara Borringdon can never be yours. You know it; you know that parents and circumstances are against you. You know, in your own mind, that it is but playing with a passion that can never succeed. It is cruel to her, and to me! True, I have listened to your talk of Clara as I do to poetry. As poetry, it was beautiful,—as matter of grave speculation, it is—folly. I have long regarded it as such; my visit to Barhead has rivetted on me its deepest conviction; and you—you, Charles, have regarded it as such too. How often have you said, “No! our union never can take place!”

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed Charles, “do you take advantage of the language of a lover’s grief in the moment of temporary despondency, to build on it your own selfish hopes? Was it for this, Harriet, that you consoled with me, and professed to soothe me? Oh! have I so mistaken you? And can you really have thus misled your father? Is there then, no truth on the earth?”

“My father! Charles Welstead—my father is a man of the world. He has long enough, without any words of mine, seen what were your feelings towards me, or what they ought to have

been. He has judged you by your conduct, and acted, accordingly, with a prompt munificence which should have spared his daughter the present scene. Charles, you are mine, or you are a villain! But no!" she said, as it were recollecting herself, "a villain you cannot be;" and she approached and took hold of his hand. "You love me, and I forgive your violence. It is hard to part with the last illusions of boyhood, but you *will* part with them, and we shall be happy, everything invites us to be happy—yes, far happier than we are miserable now."

She kissed Charles's forehead, and looked into his face with a countenance in which passion had assumed a tenderer and almost a touching aspect, but it met no responding expression. The deadness of despair was in that of Charles Winstead. He staggered some steps towards the door, and saying, as to himself, "Gracious powers! in what an abyss I am lost!" he darted from the room.

Half blind he sprang down the steps. He heard, or thought he heard, in the tumult of his feelings, the voice of Harriet crying, "Charles! Charles! one word," but in the next instant he was out of doors. Again he heard his name uttered. He cast one glance up to Miss Frodsham's window. She stood there with a face pale

as his own, and set as it were into stone by the cold revulsion of passion. She beckoned to him hastily and peremptorily, and cried, "Come back, I insist!—" But he rushed on. In the next instant he was in the cab, which was still at the gate, and was advancing to town as rapidly as he had come from it.

It may be imagined in what a state he reached his chambers. It was in the lowest depth of wretchedness. He saw the dreadful situation in which he was placed. The woman whose friendship had been the solace of long years, by the rashness of an unexpected passion, converted into his ruin. Her father, on whose friendship he had built so much, and whose kindness had been so grateful to him, converted into the most dangerous of enemies. The peace and estate of his father again endangered,—for what might not a doting and enraged father, like Mr. Frodsham, do? The sin of ingratitude, yes, and of still worse conduct laid to his charge; for the fond father would, of course, believe his daughter against the world itself, were it to come with all its powers and tongues to convince him against her. The peace of Clara wounded,—it was too much. The words of Miss Jesse Borringdon came, as with a trumpet's sound, again into his mind; and he sank beneath the weight of circumstances, and gave

way to an agony of tears. To this, a deep and desponding melancholy succeeded; he sate for hours and reviewed his situation; it seemed to him as if the climax of his fate was come. What prospect was there for him, with the evil that such a man as Mr. Frodsham could do him, in his professional path? and he could be furious, he felt sure of that. To know that his character would be blasted by the assertion, that, to his best friend, his greatest benefactor, he had proved deceitful, and had wounded his domestic peace irreparably in the wanton trifling with his only daughter's affections! to know that this would be said, and spread, and that without his power to stop it, or justify himself, was a bitter and a fearful reflection. But far worse was the feeling that all confidence in human nature was gone; and that in the very quarter where he felt so sure of its truth, and had had so many evidences of its goodness, it should thus have broken down under him, and proved but the outer covering of an abyss of ruin and of wretchedness.

In his melancholy, he thought he would write to Clara, justify himself to her, but set her free from her engagement to him, as one whose lot was destined to be unfortunate, and to bring only distress upon those he loved, As he sate down to write this letter, one was delivered by the post-

man. It was from Clara herself. It was written evidently in the deepest unhappiness; but it breathed the most profound and yet unexacting affection. She gave him credit for retaining all his love for her; "but if," added she, "if, as has often been the fortune of noblest minds, circumstances have been too strong for your fortitude, if the hard and proud repulsion of my parents on the one hand, and the generous kindness of other friends have bound you under any obligations of duty inconsistent with our continued attachment, I will not say as I said before,—I will never give you up,—I say, 'Heaven's will be done; be just, and if you can, be happy.'"

On the perusal of this letter, the perfect darkness of night came down upon him. Clara even, would give him up. Clara, whose soul he deemed proof against all human vicissitudes—even *she* gave way. He saw the fearful circumstances which surrounded him, and surrendered himself as lost!

Ah, in that gloomy hour, how short did even Charles Welstead fall of doing that noble soul justice! It was only in the excess of her love, and under the hope of lifting some degree of perplexity from his mind, that she was prepared to sacrifice her own peace for his relief. But a better feeling speedily took possession of his heart. He sate

down, and, amid torrents of tears, poured out his whole soul to her. He vowed new vows of everlasting fidelity, and shewed her that, for one hour, since he first loved her, his heart had never quitted its love and its trust in her, nor ever should it to the day of his death, though he should live and die in poverty, under calumny and sorrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

DOINGS OF DIFFERENT LADIES.

IN the interview which Charles Welstead sought with Miss Jesse Borringdon, much was revealed that filled him with wonder, and, at the same time, with pity, deep and sincere, for Harriet Frodsham ; much, however, which would never have come to his knowledge had not the strange events of the last chapter taken place, but which now gave a certain degree of peace to his mind, and strengthened him to meet what should follow. Miss Jesse Borringdon's warnings had arisen from a painful experience in which she had been made the confidential adviser of Mr. Frodsham, years ago ; and which out of a feeling of the sanctity of such confidence, nothing but this circumstance could have induced her to open to Charles Welstead. It was the fact that,

in Harriet Frodsham's nineteenth year, she had formed an attachment to a youth who had been put under the care of Mr. Frodsham by a gentleman of high family, to prepare him for the bar. The passion, which was mutual between the two young people, Mr. Frodsham deemed it right, on discovering, to make known to the youth's father, who instantly summoned him away. But, though separated, they still continued to correspond, and that for such a period that their attachment had grown into an intensity of no ordinary kind. The subject had been especially painful to Mr. Frodsham; because the gentleman, the father of the youth, did not hesitate, notwithstanding Mr. Frodsham's honest and prompt discovery of the fact to him, to blame him as having been willing to connive at, and even favour the attachment, out of selfish views. On no man living could such an aspersion fall more unjustly, nor on any one could it make a more painful impression.

But this was not all. The gentleman, who had subsequently placed his son in an eminent legal house at Bristol, was not a little astonished to meet him one day, when he supposed him engaged in his master's office, walking in Kensington Gardens with Miss Frodsham. It was said that, in his rage, he actually struck his son with his cane. One thing is certain; he himself saw Miss Frod-

sham, spite of a very indignant resistance on her part, in his own carriage to her father's house in the city, and delivered her into his hands with words whose cold and bitter insult sank deep and dagger-like into that unhappy father's heart.

Oh, how deeply then did he feel the loss which he had had in his beloved wife's death! With her care and oversight of their daughter, all this had been prevented. It was the want of the mother's heart and eye, the quick, instinctive, and ever-present spirit of the woman and the mother, that had manifested themselves in his child; it was a want which nothing now could remedy. That training, that guidance, that gentle instilment of all that was beautiful and delicate in the female character, of all that was strong and great in morals, he felt that no school could supply like the school of the mother's bosom, and her daily converse and example. He shuddered as he reflected on this, for his daughter's future. Great and lovely as were the natural features of her mind and disposition, he dreaded that there was, in the absence of maternal discipline and inculcation, a foundation laid, unstable, from the weakness of certain principles, or from the inequality of passion and clear feeling of duty. These thoughts were to him a bitterness beyond expression. He resolved, as far as in him lay, to

study and enter into his daughter's mind and feelings; to teach her to look to him not only as a tender father, but a friend and companion; and his hope of the strength and safety thus induced, was his only consolation. But, before time could be given to make much progress in this plan, a fresh revelation took place.

The gentleman, finding that no spot in England was safe for his son, from what he deemed this designing girl, changed his career from that of the law, to diplomacy, and sent him in the suite of a noble friend of his, who was going out to India as Governor-General. What then was his astonishment, on accompanying his son to the vessel on the day of embarkation, to find, and that assuredly by accident, for it was intended to avoid such exposure, Miss Harriet Frodsham also embarked in the same vessel, under an assumed name! She had made use of the liberty her father had given her as his young but clever housekeeper, to draw from his banker a sum sufficient as the ordinary item for the monthly expenditure, to pay her passage out, and they were to be married at the Cape!

Once more, the indignant man presented to Mr. Frodsham his daughter, with this new and extraordinary history! This time he made use of no other words than, after relating to Mr. Frodsham

the simple facts of the case, congratulating him on the possession of so promising a child, and withdrew with a cutting smile.

It would be difficult to say whether this termination of this strange love affair fell with a more desolating weight on father or daughter. Mr. Frodsham seemed annihilated by it. The strength of indomitable passion in his only child ; the power which this passion displayed of dissolving all other principle in her ; the acts and the resolutions that it had inspired her with ; all fell with a crushing effect upon him. Not the least infusion of bitterness in this cup was the fact that, his only child, his tenderly-cherished child, his only solace and domestic companion in his widowed life, on whom he had built all his hopes—should have been ready, without a word or a farewell, to abandon him at once and for ever for another.

For a time, he contemplated giving up his fine practice and retiring to America, but he soon found that the care and occupation of his business was the only chance of salvation for his intellect. As for his daughter, an illness as violent as her attachment, was the result of her disappointment. It was attended with high delirium, and at one time death or insanity appeared the only alternative. But neither of these was realized ; and, with the departure of her fever, came such a severe sorrow

and remorse as soon brought all the affection of the father back ; and, in this tender affection, a more than forgiveness of all her folly and weakness, as he called it ; but which was, in fact, an extraordinary strength—a gigantic strength of passion.

An extremely delicate state of health succeeded, and Mr. Frodsham travelled abroad with her. From the moment of her issuing from her chamber, where she had enjoyed the almost constant society and motherly conversation of Miss Jesse Borringdon, all the quiet and beautiful features of her character became again predominant. She was the tender, affectionate, dutiful daughter, the kind and ready friend. Her taste, her talents, her love of reading and music, every day became more and more conspicuous, and her father fondly hoped and believed that she had received experience so bitter in the heyday of her youth, as would shield her for ever against a recurrence of similar unhappiness.

“ But,” said Miss Jesse Borringdon, “ I have always observed in Miss Frodsham the same elements, slumbering perhaps, but unextinguished. She is possessed of quick and vehement passions. They are part of her nature, and that nature is composed of strange opposites. Her heart is full of the tenderest and best feelings. If left in re-

pose, she is gentle, gay, witty, and domestic ; if excited, there is no limit to that excitement, except the force of the exciting cause, and of her own physical powers. I have always observed the earnestness with which she throws herself into any service for her friends, and her intense admiration of talent and excellence in others. On these grounds I have never ceased to tremble for her, though her father's confidence in her seems now to be fixed fast as on a rock. And in truth, there are few young people that I do, under ordinary circumstances, so highly esteem, admire, and love, as Harriet Frodsham ; but I know that she is like the sky, that is one hour clear as crystal and full of sunshine, and the next, may be black with thunder, and one fearful scene of tempestuous disorder."

Miss Jesse added, that she had never been without her fears of the intimacy of Charles. That he knew her warnings, though she could not express to him their grounds ; and that it was only in the knowledge that Miss Frodsham had of Charles's deep attachment to Clara, that she had placed her hopes of safety.

" But what is now to be done ?" asked Charles, in deep distress. " What will her father say to me ? How shall I appear in his eyes ? How will he act towards my father ?"

“ Mr. Frodsham is an honourable man,” said Miss Jesse. “ It is true that he is deeply wrapped up in his daughter, and that, for a time, may blind him to a just judgment in the case ; but that just judgment *will* come. Harriet herself will come to see, and bitterly, bitterly to repent, the error she has been led into. I shall, I feel no doubt of it, be taken into his confidence in the affair ; and I shall, as prudently as I can, sway his mind to the right point. And be assured that, however angry he may for a time be with you, he will take no unworthy advantage against your father. You must, my young friend, prepare yourself to bear for a season, hard thoughts, and even reproaches ; but you must bear them patiently, and you will have your reward.”

And Charles soon found occasion to put in exercise the advice now given. He received a letter from Mr. Frodsham, couched in the most violent terms. It accused him of playing with the affections of Harriet. It treated his attachment to Miss Borringdon as a chimera ; his attentions to Harriet as sufficient, with Harriet's own declarations, to satisfy any father ; and it concluded by saying—“ Will you then repay all my kindness to, my regard for you, by killing my child ? And for what ? For a dream that can never prove anything else ? For a proud, haughty woman,

the member of a haughty and heartless house, which has spurned, and will continue to spurn you? Be wise, Charles; let the misery that has been caused be put an end to. Come to us as a son, and save Harriet from the frightful state into which your falsehood has thrown her. Come at once, or it may be too late!"

This letter threw Charles into the most dreadful condition. He hastened away to Miss Jesse Borringdon to beseech her counsel; and that counsel was to be patient, to be as still as possible; only to write a letter to Mr. Frodsham containing the real truth, but accompanied by every respectful expression towards himself, and of sympathy for his daughter.

After many attempts and alterations, this letter was written and dispatched; and, in order to get away as much as possible from the state of nervous tension, and of anxiety, in which he found himself, Charles that evening went to the theatre, for him a rare occurrence. The relief, however, was but partial; for, so completely was his mind coloured, intoned, and stained through and through with the circumstances of the hour, that he was either lost in his own thoughts and forgetful of the scene before him, or he saw in the actors and actresses, Mr. Frodsham, Miss Jesse Borringdon, Harriet, Clara, Frederica; and the

very passages of the play seemed only distorted representations of the real facts which agitated him, and as if they were all playing at cross purposes with one another.

As he issued from beneath the portico of the theatre, he thought himself still under the influence of those delusions, and began actually to doubt of the mastery of his senses, for a young lady leaning on the arm of a more elderly one, both of them veiled, and attended by a servant in livery, accosted him by name. He stared at her a moment, for the voice was that of Frederica Borringdon. He glanced at the man in livery, it was the servant of Miss Jesse Borringdon!

"Don't you know me, Charles?" said the young lady, putting aside her veil. "Frederica!" exclaimed Charles, "you here! Good Heavens! What has happened? Is Clara ill? Is she—"

"Oh, nothing of the kind," said Frederica, taking his arm. "Clara is quite well—*quite* happy," giving Charles's arm a warm pressure, "Since she received a certain letter," added she in a whisper. "But"—aloud—"I want you to go along with us to my aunt's. I have a little business that I must have your help and sage counsel in. So, there is the carriage."

They entered together and drove off. Frederica appeared in very good spirits; there could

be nothing very serious that she had to disclose to him, thought Charles. When they reached Miss Jesse Borringdon's, the good old lady said there was supper laid; Charles and Frederica could partake of it, but, as she did not sup, she should bid them good night, and so left them. As she closed the door, Frederica turned to Charles, and said—

“Have you heard from Philip lately?”

“No.”

“Not within three weeks?”

“No.”

“Really, that is strange. Then I shall, perhaps, surprise you. Prepare for a surprise; and not an agreeable one.”

Frederica said this with a grave tone, and yet with a smile; Charles could not tell what to think.

“What do you think, Charles?—now be prepared—what do you think of Philip having got into debt again?”

“Into debt again!” exclaimed Charles. “Heavens! can he have been so weak?—so rash—so stark mad? Nay, then, I have done with him; done with him for ever.”

“Don't be so sure of that,” said Frederica with a smile; “besides you are not got to the worst. He is not only in debt, but in prison.”

“ In prison ! How can you sport thus with me, Frederica ? What *do* you mean ? You smile as you say this, it is some trick ; but I am in no state of nerves to bear this ; tell me, dear Frederica, at once, *what is it ?* ”

“ It is what I say,” added Frederica, laying her hand on Charles’s arm, and looking seriously and tenderly at him. “ But I want you not to be violent ; not to be alarmed ; I am not. I am hopeful and happy.”

“ Happy ? ”

“ Yes, happy. The debt into which Philip is fallen is not his own. It is an act of good-nature to save a friend ; and that friend, as usual, has let him suffer.”

“ Is it possible ? And could Philip be so foolish—so childish ? And where is Randall with all his fine promises ? Oh, human nature ! how I begin to see through thee ; what poor stuff thou art ! ”

“ Nonsense, what human nature ! ” said Frederica, who thought it anything but poor stuff. “ Hav’n’t the philosophers been preaching, and writing, and printing just that one fact ever since there were philosophers ? and what blockheads must we be if we have not yet learned *that* ! Well, hear now. Randall has been making so many promises, that while he has been keeping some of

them, others,—like too many irons in the fire—have got burnt. Randall, in fact, has been getting married.”

“ Married ! ”

“ Yes, married. The old rector is gone at last. Randall has got his long-awaited-for living, and has married his long-waiting bride ; and so, while this was doing, this happens, and poor Philip is put into gaol for his good-nature.”

Charles was silent. He appeared angry and disconcerted. At length, he said solemnly, addressing Frederica :

“ You astonish me beyond measure. Can you see such absolute weakness in Philip, and still hope for happiness with such a man ? Are you not more foolish—pardon me, but are you not, than this silly, thoughtless fellow himself ? Where is all this to end ? And when will this cross-grained world have heaped trouble enough on me ? ”

“ Now don't go and be sublime, Charles. I know you have trouble enough just now ; there are silly, weak, women, Charles, as well as silly, weak men, eh ? but as to Philip, I tell you he has as good a heart as beats in this world, and wants only me to advise him. Do you hear ? That is all ; he wants me only to advise him, and so I am going to advise him ; and you must

go to-night and secure two inside places in the Oxford coach ; it sets off at five in the morning."

" The Oxford coach ! you surely do not mean that you are going yourself to Oxford to see this wretched boy !"

" Yes, I do mean that I am going to Oxford to see that wretched boy, and to help him out of his wretchedness, and to send him off to Randall as soon as possible."

" Frederica," said Charles, gravely, " I cannot sanction anything of the sort. Let me advise you seriously, as you value your happiness, to renounce this hopeless man at once. Spare your money and your—"

" Trouble—of course you are going to say. But I tell you, Charles Welstead, that you may spare your preachment,—for to-morrow morning I am off to Oxford by the coach, and if you will not accompany me, why, my aunt shall, that is all ! And as to renouncing, you Welsteads are mighty ready at renouncing ladies to whom you have once, nay, a thousand times, sworn to be faithful to the world's end. Now if we, that is Clara and myself, were not just the two most sensible and reasonable girls on earth, why, we should have taken you at your word, and been some doleful countesses or duchesses, or something of the sort, now ; and you—ah ! then you would

have been prettily off! Yes, you may smile—thank goodness, that you can smile again; but here's this stupid Philip, as you say, he is really a very silly fellow, has been doing this very thing; that is, writing to me to say that he is so utterly unworthy of me, that he breaks his heart, and gives me up! Now is not that very fine? Oh, it is rare talking—when one's heart is given on the faith of young men's promises—of being given up! Give me my heart back again, and *then*; but exchange of hearts is not an exchange of rings, that can be slipped off and on, and off again, and are good rings still, and do not break. Give me my heart back, Master Philip, and wipe out all memory of the past, and give it free fancy—ready to fly at some lord or Sir John, and *then*; but that is folly, indeed, to talk so; and for what? For a paltry £200, and here it is," said Frederica, laughing, and holding up her purse.

"Now be a good fellow, Charles; here, get some supper. I assure you *I* am ravenously hungry, and then off to the coach-office. I will tell you enough as we go along to-morrow, to make you love and admire your brother, with all his faults, and he has plenty of them, and you too—I tell you that."

With this, Frederica laid aside her bonnet, and placed herself at the table. Charles stood and

gazed in wonder at her; a wonder that gradually grew into a most affectionate admiration of her. He began to suspect that Frederica was far more truly philosophical than himself. That she saw the true nature of life and of mankind. That we are all frail and erring creatures, and that we must not *exact* perfection from those we love, but should try, by generous forgiveness, and cheerful love and devotion, to build them up into it. As he gazed on her in this mood of mind, he was also struck by the singular beauty of her person. It was more than three years since he had seen her; and, in that time, her form had become more womanly, and her face had acquired a beauty of feature and expression that amazed him. Her large and brilliant eyes had a soul in them that sent their glances into the very bottom of the heart. Her countenance had at once the roseate bloom of health, the culture of aristocratic breeding, and the sunny, heavenly, and enchanting expression of a bright, happy, and intellectual spirit. As she turned her glorious eyes on Charles, as he stood there gazing on her, and with a smile of a somewhat satirical, but good humour on her lips, he said softly, and in an affectionate tone:

“ Pardon me, my dear Frederica, for my folly and violence, but it is impossible to look on you,

and not feel that you are right; that you are an angel of Heaven. But how beautiful you are ! How wonderfully you are improved."

Frederica blushed like a full-blown rose, and rising hastily, said—" Now don't stand there flattering me; sit down and get some supper, and then be off."

But Charles could not eat. He pressed her hand affectionately, promised to fetch her in good time in the morning, and hurried away.

On the way to Oxford, the next day, Frederica was in the same good spirits. She reiterated her good opinion of Philip, to the satisfaction of Charles's brotherly heart. He felt, indeed, that with such a companion as Frederica, Philip could not be anything but a good and happy man. On the subject of Harriet Frodsham, they did not so well agree: Frederica regarded her as a violent, vain, selfish, and unprincipled woman. Charles vindicated her on the same grounds that Frederica vindicated Philip; that she had many good qualities, but one great weakness; but Frederica would not admit the parallel. " When," she asked, " did Philip display any selfishness? When did he, with open eyes, endeavour to steal away, or rather, carry off by a *coup de main*, a heart pledged, by all that was sacred, to another? No, her aunt might think well of Harriet, she was

good-natured to every body ; but for herself, she must confess to entertaining the worst possible opinion of Miss Frodsham. How could a right-thinking woman *always* go wrong ? How could she like Danvers, and Mellor, and Lady Borringdon, and that *genus*, and not be wanting either in taste or principle ?

On this head, the more they talked the farther apart they grew, so they turned to a more congenial subject, and that was David Borringdon. David was gone from Edinburgh to Hamburg, and meant to spend the summer in travelling through Holstein and Denmark, Sweden and Norway, with his artist-friend, who was going to sketch there.

“ If David’s health *were but better*, ” said Frederica, with a sigh ; “ but he is still so weak, so pale. I have often dreadful fears about David,” and her tears fell fast, and she was silent.

The coach stopped ; they were in Oxford. After dinner, which was on table for the coach passengers, they entered a fly, and drove to the debtor’s prison. They thought it best that Charles should see his brother first, and prepare him for what must be a most unexpected surprise—the presence of Frederica.

When Charles entered, he found Philip sunk in the lowest state of despondency. He had lost

all confidence in himself, and hearing nothing in reply to his letter to Frederica, he concluded that she also despised him, and he gave himself up to desperation. When he saw Charles, he only gave a groan, and cast his eyes on the ground without attempting to rise or to speak. Charles advanced and seated himself at his side; took his hand, and began to speak kindly and consolingly to him. But this only threw him into a convulsion of grief, and he at length begged Charles to leave him, for that he could do nothing for him. He was ruined, that he knew, beyond all hope; and he had no fitness for the world. But Charles, who had now imbibed something of Frederica's philosophy, instead of reproaching him, told him that it was no such thing as a hopeless case with him. That what he wanted was, to think far better of himself. To think so well, that he would find his pride arrayed against his weakness, and would fear to relapse into a feeble concession, far more than he now did to say no to an importunate comrade.

Philip only shook his head, and asked how he came to know that he was in gaol?

"From Frederica, to be sure!"

"From Frederica?"

"From Frederica."

Philip raised himself with a start. He cast

his eyes for the first time on his brother, and said,

"Then she does not utterly despise me? She does not utterly give me up as lost?"

"No, she does not."

Then I am content. Let what will come, I shall have that consolation. I will do what you please, Charles; and go where you please when I can get out of this. I think, if I were a soldier, Charles, and went abroad. I know I should not disgrace you then; I am not weak that way; I am not cowardly; and I should dare something even great, with the feeling that Frederica and you still thought I was not bad, and that I should rejoice you with good news of me. Well, thank God, thank God, that Frederica does not quite despise me!"

"Quite the contrary," said Charles, "she came up to London at once to send me down to you; to make all right for you."

"She came to London?" said Philip, rising to his feet. "She did?" He clasped his hands as he looked up towards Heaven; a momentary blush spread over face and forehead; but there was a fire in his eyes that had a kind of triumph in it, and that contended with shame only to master it.

"She came to London? and to set me right?"

"Yes, and she would have come here—"

"Oh, gracious heaven! No! I could not bear that; I should die! Oh! that were too much; how *should* I bear to see her?"

"But," said Charles, "you must see her; and you will be glad to see her. She is so good, so kind, so happy, and so beautiful."

"She is here! I know it!" said Philip, covering his eyes, and beginning to tremble like an aspen leaf from head to foot. "Spare me, Charles! entreat her!—no, I could not see her now for the world!"

But at this instant the door opened, and Frederica, with a face all bathed in smiles and tears, softly entered, and in a moment the lovers were in each other's arms.

It was some time before the silence was broken, except by the sobs of Philip, down whose cheeks the tears were rolling in plentiful drops. The first words were uttered by Frederica; who, gazing on Philip's face, and putting back the long, black hair that lay over his brow, said gently, "My Philip, you are not angry with me; you do not think I have done wrong in coming thus to free you from your trouble! But I want you out; I want you away; and there is nothing like doing things that must be done quickly, oneself."

And, with a smile which would have made a

beloved one happy even in the moment of death, she seated herself by his side; and they began to talk of what must be done, and done at once. The debt for which Philip had made himself responsible was to be paid directly. Philip was to set off that very day for Devonshire, where Randall would attend his studies, and accompany him to Oxford to take his degree. Charles and Frederica would be off again to town that very evening.

It may be well imagined what were the feelings of Philip. From the depths of despair he was suddenly raised to life, hope, and freedom. There were no reproaches, but a faith in him, which made him only resolve from this hour to deserve it. As he saw Frederica smiling and glowing with a resplendent beauty that seemed to have invested her as with a heavenly halo, and felt the strength and glad serenity of her spirit, he seemed to become strong and aspiring himself. He made no vows, but he followed Frederica with eyes in which the profoundest gratitude, the most admiring love burned, and he was like a happy child in the hands of Charles and her. They did not quit Oxford till they had seen him safely in the coach for Devonshire. The following morning they were themselves again in town.

Charles had now to set out on his first circuit,—that of his own part of the country—the northern. He had hoped to do that with all the advantages of an introduction to the Court, and to the chief attorneys of the northern counties, from his friend, Frodsham; but that was all over now. He could still count on those of his friend and patron, Sergeant Torrent, but there was a dreadful blank in his prospects and his mind, that could not be filled up. He entered his chambers with a sinking heart. He calculated on finding letters from Walthamstow, though full of the keenest reproach; but there were none, absolutely not one! It was all over then. There was not even the angry expostulation of wounded pride; they were friends no longer. It was the settled, icy silence of hatred; of an irremediable breach.

It was with this leaden feeling in his heart, that he took leave of Frederica, who was going to remain some weeks in town; and of his kind and parental friend, Miss Jesse. There was no news with her of any kind, or she gave none, from the Frodshams; and, in this state of painful and depressing feeling, Charles Welstead entered the “mail for York,” and pursued his journey to that city. He advanced on it, haunted by a world of

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reflections little calculated to insure his success in his *debut*, if a brief *should* fall into his hands ; or to enable him to watch to advantage the course of those trials which must be to him so rich with instruction for the future.

CHAPTER XVII.

FIRST CIRCUIT, AND PUZZLING BRIEF.

ON his arrival in York, Charles Welstead presented his letters of introduction to the different parties to whom they were addressed ; and found in most quarters, a truly friendly and encouraging reception. The name and long and active services of his father as a magistrate, and in the liberal interest of the county, were well known, and procured for him a very favourable opinion in the minds of most of those on whom he called. His appearance manly and indicative of much activity and talent ; and perhaps the air of thought which his feelings at this moment gave him, were all causes of a very general sentiment of kindness and respect which were evinced towards him. On taking his seat at the bar, the judge himself bowed to him, and said with much suavity, " Mr. Welstead, I am glad to see you here."

This mark of attention from so high a quarter was not lost on any one, much less on the attorneys in attendance, who are quick enough to see where favour or influence is likely to manifest itself. That very day he was engaged as junior counsel in three several causes, which though they did not give him opportunity of pleading, yet did of examining evidence, which duty he discharged in a manner so able, and to so good an effect, that in so young a man, on his very first appearance in court, raised the most sanguine expectations.

That evening he was congratulated by many of the members of the bar, who appeared, so far from being actuated by any jealousy, to be anxious to cultivate his acquaintance. But the most important fact still awaited him. One of the partners of the eminent firm of Haywood and Bramley, of Sheffield, waited on him at his lodgings, and put into his hands a brief. He was informed that the cause to which it belonged, was likely to be heard on the third day from that time, and the solicitor begged to be allowed to call on him early the next morning, to make him acquainted with all the particulars, and to introduce him to the principal witnesses on his side.

On examining this brief, after the attorney had taken his leave, what was his astonishment

to find that he was called on to defend a poor man of the name of Garret, of his own native place, Scartland, and that, as it was alleged, against the oppression and unworthy attempt of Sir Thomas Borringdon, of Barhead !

The fact struck him as somewhat strange. That it should be first against Sir Thomas that he should be pitted ; that, almost before it could be known to any one but his own family, that he would this assize be able to come on this circuit, this brief should be in readiness for him, and directed against such a quarter. Had his father been engaged in this defence, there would have been nothing singular in it ; but from his father or his brother George, he had received no single syllable relating to it. The more he pondered upon it, the more he became alarmed ; and on returning to the subject the next morning, he felt so convinced that it was the work of an enemy, intended to ruin him beyond redemption with Sir Thomas, that he had resolved, before the arrival of the attorney, to throw up the brief.

The attorney came at eight o'clock. He said he must apologize for his early call, as he must be in court at ten o'clock with another case. Charles now begged to be informed, before going further into the business, by what

party he was retained. By the friends of Garrett, he answered. He begged to be informed who these friends were. The attorney replied, they were numerous, as the case was defended by subscription; but probably the names might be unknown to Mr. Welstead, as they were chiefly of the working class.

"I am from the spot," said Charles, shortly.

"I am aware of it," replied the man of law as shortly, and beginning to look displeased.

"But how does it happen that no names of note in the neighbourhood are to be found, even though it be by subscription, in the defence? Is my father not one?"

"No."

"Who is, then?"

"Mr. Lister, the clergyman."

"That is good," said Charles; "and who else?"

"Mr. Danvers."

"Mr. Danvers? Oh!" said Charles; "indeed, Mr. Danvers! that is an independent man, of course. Pray is his name known publicly as engaged in the behalf of this poor man?"

"Of course not. I only give it you in confidence; merely to show the respectability of the defence."

"You have said enough," replied Charles.

" You may think I am a very foolish young man to be so delicate in my engagement, but I am afraid I cannot hold the brief."

" You cannot! O very well! I am very sorry,—very sorry; I meant to do you good, but you know best," rising.

Here the door was opened, and a face that struck Charles as being familiar to him was thrust in. It was that of a great, tall, rawboned youth, of a very countrified and half-sheepish aspect, very red all over, and with very soft whitish and downy whiskers. His large blue eyes fixed themselves eagerly on Charles, and his mouth half open, seemed as if it would speak, but did not.

" Who are you?" demanded the attorney, in no very civil tone. " What do you want? Don't you see that we are privately engaged?"

" I wunna disturb ye," said the youth, " but I am to give you these," holding out two letters towards Charles; " I am to give them into Mr. Counsellor Welstead, Esquire's, own hands, and into nobody's elses, and that directly. That's yo, Measter Welstead; yo known me, young Tommy Scantlebury. Yo'n na forgotten me, I reckon?" said he, with a familiar nod. " My fayther and moother send their best sarvice to you, and hope ye'r well."

Charles could not help smiling as the recollection of Tommy Scantlebury broke at once upon him. How often had he laughed at the miller's anecdote of Tommy getting a pain in his chest by running to the next village with his mouth open! But he was actually from Scartland. A thousand things rushed into his mind at once, and snatching the letters, he said, "Thomas, you must wait here till I can see you further. You must not go. You hear?"

"O no, sir, I shanna go. I want to see you, sir, as much as you want to see me. The old squire and madam send their love to you," nodding again half respectfully, half familiarly.

"Ah well, Thomas; that's right. Go into the next room, and wait till I can see you. We'll have some breakfast soon. I want a world of talk with you."

"That's right! that's right! I knew you would. I told fayther soo. I knew *you'd* never be too proud to remember old neebors;" again nodding, and drawing his large red face back, and giving the door a pull to after him, that made it slap like a gun going off.

Charles cast a glance on the letters. His colour rose like fire. They were from Clara and Frederica Borringdon! "Excuse me," said he to the attorney, who was stiffly waiting to re-

ceive the brief and withdraw; "excuse me a moment, there may be some explanation here."

He ran over the letter of Clara. It was, as he expected, relative to this case; and its opening words enabled him to say at once to the attorney that he was satisfied, that he would retain the brief, and do his utmost in the case. The attorney bowed; the witnesses were introduced by name, some of whom were well known to Charles, and their depositions put into his hands. The clergyman who had come to give his evidence, and to use his influence on behalf of his poor parishioner, was not present, but had promised to call at ten, and from him Charles was sure that he should gain a full and clear knowledge of the whole case. All being now satisfactory, Charles made his most graceful apologies to the man of law for his hesitation, thanked him graciously for putting the affair into his hands, and begged him to stop and breakfast with him. The worthy man's good-humour being restored, he regretted that the pressure of business during the assize, did not allow him to stay a moment longer, but pressed Charles to dine with him at his inn that evening, which he promised to do, and so the attorney took his leave.

The letters of Clara and Frederica Borringdon

threw a good deal of light on the nature of the case, but referred Charles to Mr. Lister for more. They told him that there was the hand of an enemy in the matter. That Jack Danvers was anxious, as they learned from good authority, that he should be retained against Sir Thomas—the motive being obvious enough; but they bade Charles by all means to undertake the case. They were as anxious as Jack Danvers could be, nay, more so, that he should undertake it. He would learn from the witnesses, but especially from Mr. Lister, that the real gravamen of the case was against Dick Mellor, and not against their father, who knew nothing of it, except from his representations. It was a case of grievous cruelty, and only one of many, and they felt sure that if Charles would but hold up this fact well to public notice, Dick Mellor's last day would soon be come at Barhead. They bade him go on and fear not, for it was *their* cause, and that he must recollect that he spoke and pleaded for humanity—and for *them*!"

Frederica's letter was dated from London, but had been enclosed to Barhead. In her anxiety for Philip she had forgotten this cause then, and therefore she had written to her sister, and desired her to send some one express to meet

Charles at York, and give him a true insight into the case.

It would be a rich treat if we could give our readers a full and real representation of the conversation of Tommy Scantlebury with Charles over their breakfast ; but that itself would occupy two or three chapters. Tommy was grown into a very tall lean fellow, with much of what the country people call the *sawfley* manner of his father about him. An air of simplicity was mixed up with a good deal of country shrewdness. His manner to Charles was half that of deference to his rank and legal character, half of familiarity, from remembering his strolls with him through the woods and fields of Scartland, carrying his game-bag, and from the building of the mill. After a great many questions on the part of Charles as to the people and affairs at Scartland, he asked Thomas what exactly was this case ; and this was the sort of reply he got.

“ Why you see, Mr. Charles, the young ladies one night last winter——”

“ What young ladies ?”

“ O the young ladies of Barhead, to be sure,” said Tommy, with a sly look at Charles ; “ didn’t I bring you letters from them ? Well, as the

young ladies were going out to dinner one night last winter,—it was a terribly snowy night, and the snow blinded the coachman, and he welly upset th' carriage in a ditch. The young ladies were dreadfully frightened, you're sure. They knocked the door open, however, smashing all the glass, and got out. There was the coachman with his horses down in the ditch, bawling with all his might, in a howl more melancholy than a wolf's, 'My tits are killed! My tits are killed!'

"They were none killed, but they were in a terrible foul ditch, and it was in a desperate dreary lane, a couple a' miles amost from home, and near no house. But the ladies bade him hold his horses' heads down on the bank, for their heads were not down in the ditch, only their bodies, or they'd abeen slockened,—and they'd run for help. So away they goes, and along that dismal lane they runs; and it snowed and blowed as if it would blind old Sampson after his eyes were put out; and they could no more see their way than he could. So they shouts and shouts. But it was to no purpose; and at last as they were hurrying on welly up to their knees in snow, all in their nice silk gowns and stockings, and shoes no thicker nor paper, they runs agin summot, and it moves. It

looked just like a moving snow-ruck, but they stops and says, 'Who's there?' and out of th' snow-ruck comes a voice as says, 'It's me.'

" 'And who are you?' said they.

" 'Why, it's me, John Hanson,' says the snow-ruck. Yo seen it wor old John Hanson; that's an old collier, that for these forty years has worked at filling coal boats at th' canal, but every night, summer and winter, at six o'clock, he's just going over the same ground homewards, wi' a thumping big coal on's head. O Lors, what a life that man's had! Every day, summer and winter, for forty years, mind you. Up at five i' th' morning, and going back at six at night, often through frost and snow, with a coal maybe a hundred weight on's head. For they allowed him, as part of his wages, as big a coal as he could carry; and so, poor old soul, his wages being little enough, he has made his coal, and so his daily burden big enough.

" Well, this old creature, this old slave, snail, or what you may call him, was it; and the young ladies cried out——

" 'Oh! if you be a Christian, do, run to the nearest house and call help, for our carriage is overturned, and the horses and coachman are down in the ditch, and will perish if they have not help quickly.'

•

“ ‘ And pray-ye, who may ye be?’ asked old John.

“ ‘ O don’t stand asking here,’ said the ladies, ‘ but run, good man, run. We are the ladies of Barhead.’

“ ‘ Well, then, God bless you!’ said old John, flinging his coal into a bush, that nobody might tumble over it in the dark. ‘ Well, then, God bless you for the sweetest, prettiest ladies in all this county. I’ll do my best, any how. But as to my running, I havn’t run these twenty years, for I’m seventy-two; but I’ll do my best; and come along wi’ me, or you’ll be lost too.’

“ So away he goes, and they after him, and a good mark was he, for he was as black as a sweep, and so they could see him amid the snow. And he sartainly did his best, for he went on a shog trot, as he called it; and it was all the young ladies could do to keep up with him. Presently he turns off to the right, up a dark narrow lane, and then down into a wood, and they were frightened, and said, ‘ In Heaven’s name, man, whither do you lead us?’

“ ‘ To the pits here, just by. The men that do the night stints are at work, and we shall get help there. There’s none to be had besides within a mile or more.’

“ And so he led them up a hill, and then at

once they saw fires blazing in the wind, and the great gins of the coal-pits going screaming, and the big steam-engine groaning and sobbing like a giant in trouble, and men bawling to their horses. A wild scene it was, and enough to frighten two young high-bred ladies. But old John said, 'Dunna be frightened, my sweet ladies, nobody will do you any harm, grim as they looken.'

"And as he spoke they came upon a pit bank, and there were several colliers peddling* in a hovel built of great coals; and a rare blazing fire they had; and another great fire blazed on the pit-bank. Old John shouted, 'Help, lads! help, in Heaven's name!' And at that out bolted half-a-dozen great black fellows, with eyes and teeth that flashed whitely out of their black faces, and they said, 'What's amiss?'

"At the sight of them the ladies crept close behind old John, and a strange scene it must have looked to anybody; those handsome ladies with handkerchiefs tied over their heads, for they had no bonnets on, as they were going to a grand dinner, and all in their fine silken clothes, and these great black fellows a-staring at them, in that wild spot, all amongst the pit-works, and with the great fires blazing and blowing in the wind.

* Drinking.

“ ‘What’s up?’ asked the colliers; and old John, as soon as he could catch his breath, said,

“ ‘These are the young ladies of Barhead,’ and all caps went off at once; ‘their carriage is upset in the lane, down by Briggum Brush there, and the coachman and the horses are all killed, or will be, if ye dunna run and help em.’

“ ‘Lord Almighty!’ said they, and away they went, and left old John to shew the ladies home. But home they wouldna go till they’d seen th’ fate of th’ coach and horses, and man. As good luck would have it, they were all got out safe and sound, and the young ladies walked home again, lest they should take cold riding in their wet things like; and two or three of the great black colliers walked before the carriage to see that it was safe, for the ditches were all filled level with the snow, and two or three others went on to tell their friends where they should have gone to, what had happened. And, would you believe it? the next day it was found that the horses had not been in the least hurt; nay, they had not so much as grazed a single hair. I reckon it was a soft place where they fell.”

“ Well, I suppose, then, it is this old John Hanson,” said Charles, “who is now to be tried?”

“ Nay, hold a bit there,” said Tommy; “no-

thing of the kind. This is only the *preeface*; the story has to come yet. Old John became a great favourite of the ladies up at the hall after that, for they made him go up to the hall, and gave him summut very handsome, and got him a easier place; and he often goes up of Sunday afternoons, for the young ladies are very fond of talking with him, for he is very religious, and knows a deal, too, of the country about here. Well, it was he that put them up to the real merits of this case, and so now we come to the story itself."

This was a pretty good *preeface*, and just as Tommy Scantlebury arrived at this point, Mr. Lister was announced, and told the story itself in a much more concise manner.

It was simply this. Garrett was an engine-man, that is, he looked after a steam-engine which was used to pump water out of the coal-pits. He had been employed by one coal-owner fourteen years, and by another nine. His character was so excellent, that he not only had the esteem of all his poor neighbours, but was highly valued by his employers. To get him away from his second employer, Dick Mellor had offered him a guinea a week, and a house, with run on the waste for a cow. As he had a family of six children, this offer was not to be refused. His

master, though loath to part with him, would not stand in his way; he let him go. But when he had been on Sir Thomas's colliery for six months, Dick Mellor, or the bailiff by his orders, dropped Garrett's wages to eighteen shillings. Soon after this he told him that he must pay rent for his house; and, lastly, he said the rest of the men grumbled at Garrett having a run for a cow when they had none, and took it away. Poor Garrett, who had given up a good place in the hope of a better, now found himself in a much worse, and spoke rather warmly on the subject. On this Dick Mellor threatened to horsewhip him, and Garrett, on the spot, gave three months' notice to quit. He quitted accordingly, his old master being glad to get him back; but Mellor's wicked spirit sought revenge for the poor man's offence of not bearing his tyranny; and accordingly, he allowed the engine to be unworked for some days, till the men were all driven out of the pit by water, and then charged Garrett with having conveyed this water into it to do all the mischief he could before leaving. "This is the case," said Mr. Lister, "and would, were it substantiated, transport the poor man for seven years. Such, however, is the indignation of the country at the daily practices of Mellor, that the whole of the neighbour-

hood of Scartland is resolved to defend his cause, to save the man, as we are well prepared to do; and to expose the character of Mellor, who dreadfully imposes on his employer, Sir Thomas."

We must tell a brief tale. Well did Charles perceive the reason of Danvers wishing to engage him in this cause; but having well considered it, he felt prepared to defend it, and saw that it would tend to defeat both the plans of Danvers, and his boon companion, Mellor. The case was brought into court, and stated as Mr. Lister had anticipated. Able counsel was employed, who, in truth, made an awful story of it.

It was represented that these engine-men had the lives of all the colliers in the country in their hands. It was in their power to fill the mines in an instant with water, while the men were at their work, put out all their lights, and drown every soul of them, without possibility of escape. Garrett was represented as a man of desperate passions, and unreasonable demands. That for his last conduct *he* had been *discharged*, and this had been the result, whereby not only had infinite damage been done to the works, but the lives of all the men had been put in the greatest jeopardy. It was asserted that it was a

necessary example of severity, to deter others from such dreadful acts of wickedness, and for this purpose Sir Thomas Borringdon had ordered this prosecution.

Such was the case for the prosecution, and the evidence was that of Mellor, the ground-bailiff, and two colliers.

But in reply to this, Charles Welstead shewed the facts above stated, and he shewed more. He proved that Mr. Lister, the clergyman, and on his own evidence, had gone to Mellor to try to set him right, and had offered to bring the most unexceptionable witnesses to the true state of the case; that Garrett's wife had been to him, too; and that to both Mellor had said that Garrett need not be alarmed. If he would only be quiet, *and make no defence*, he would take no harm! He only wanted to put on an air of severity, to deter others of whom he was more afraid.

Sir Thomas Borringdon was in court during this trial. He sate on the bench by the judge, and when Charles Welstead began to plead, he looked as black as a thunder-cloud. But Charles, after stating the general points of the case, and calling his witnesses, which most completely proved all his statements, then said that he was sure the most highly honourable gentle-

man, on whose estate this had occurred, was completely misinformed of the true facts, and that the real cruelty of the case lay with the steward. The facts already proved, he argued, most completely shewed this; but, as this case was one of peculiar oppression, he felt himself bound, for the further vindication of his client, to call witnesses, numerous and most unexceptionable witnesses, to prove that such acts were the daily ones of Mr. Mellor; and that they tended not only to bring his employer, Sir Thomas Borringdon, into disrepute, but to excite a most dangerous spirit in the country against property, and men of property. The animus, and wily, unprincipled spirit of the man, he thought this case, however, most peculiarly shewed. Here was a poor man who, after the most tyrannical conduct displayed towards him, after he had been beguiled out of the well-paid employment of a gentleman who respected him, on promises, every one of which was violated, was then accused of a crime which not only, if proved, would destroy his character for ever, but would banish him from his family and his country. And, as if this was not enough, he was told if he would make no defence he should not be hurt! Was ever so impudent an insult to innocence perpetrated? A man was to be accused, imprisoned, tried, and

argued against as a malefactor of the deepest dye, as a man who out of revenge to a bailiff, could and would wantonly sport with and destroy the lives of poor men, and fathers of families, like himself, and that by wholesale!

He was to suffer all this foul calumny, to suffer it to be brought forward before his country, his country's judge and jury, before heaven and earth, and was to say nothing; and yet, most miraculous! to be held harmless, and to come off scott-free and with the character of a saint! Did this Mr. Mellor, this Dick Mellor, as he was called, or this Trick Mellor, as he might more properly be called, did he think that poor men had no common sense, that they had no feeling for their character and good fame! Or did he think that there were no gentlemen of virtue, and of love of virtue, and of detestation of vice and tyranny, left in the country yet? He could tell him that the poor man was peculiarly jealous of his character. That, and his hands, were his all. There might be those, and he knew that there were those, who, being in the possession of money, no matter how got, dared to set character, principle, shame, and virtue at defiance; but, thank Heaven! there were also, and they were the majority, those who not only loved their own reputations, but would defend

that of the poor man, as the sacred duty of Christians and of Englishmen.

Mr. Mellor, forsooth, wanted to give an example of severity, to deter others of whom he was more afraid. And how did he intend to effect the infusion of this salutary terror? By trying and acquitting an innocent man? Was there any terror to evil doers in that? To bring a false and foul charge against a good man, and then let his innocence be proved; where was the use of that? How was that to inspire a salutary terror of evil? No, that was not Mr. Mellor's meaning. His meaning, and it was as shallow as it was base, was to induce this poor, injured, and innocent man, to make no defence, to let disgrace fall like a crushing rock on himself and his family, and to become, in fact, the victim, the weak and yielding victim of this bad man's malice. No words, said he, could express the indignation which such an attempt on the part of a wealthy man, in the service of a still wealthier, against a poor and an upright man, against that man's innocent family, and against the peace and security of the labouring classes of England, inspired in his mind, and, he was sure, in the minds of the jury, and of the country at large. Knowing, too, the high principles of Sir Thomas Borringdon, on whom the disgrace attend-

ing this foul prosecution had thus fallen, he was sure most erroneously, in lieu of on its real maturer, he was equally certain of two results, of the verdict of the jury, and of the verdict in the inmost soul of Sir Thomas against his wicked agent.

He then called a number of other witnesses, who proved such a series of petty, but malignant acts of tyranny and wrong towards the workmen of Sir Thomas's mines by this Mellor, as created a great and general sentiment of indignation in the court.

Sir Thomas's looks of thunder turned now from the barrister to the guilty steward. He shewed great uneasiness, and, whispering in a low voice to the judge, left the court. The jury delivered their verdict without quitting their box — *Not Guilty*, and a murmur of approbation ran through the crowd.

Charles felt that he had achieved a triumph. To say nothing of the exquisite happiness of having rescued a worthy man from the hand of his oppressor, and restored him to his family, or of the tears of the poor wife's gratitude, his heart beat, and his thoughts flew in a moment to Barhead, where he knew that this news would be received with a transport of delight. He knew that he had given a great blow to his enemies, and laid the foundation of fame and fortune; and

what a glorious feeling is that, in the first flush of youth, when the heart beats at once for virtue and honour! Such a moment is a new birth. The man feels himself, at one spring, risen from the undistinguished mass, into an individuality of recognised consequence. His soul has proved its existence; his understanding has vindicated its superiority by its own energy; and henceforward the victor of this superb moment is the honour of his family, the pride of his friends, and one of the prominent lights on the triumphal arch of his country's fame. Such a moment is worth a thousand ordinary lives!

When Charles quitted the court, many of his fellow-barristers came and congratulated him heartily on the tact, address, and eloquence, with which he managed his first cause. The solicitor from whom he had received the brief, immediately added a dozen more invitations to his dinner-party, at which Charles had again agreed to be present. At this party he was surrounded by a little band of attorneys, who poured on him the richest incense that a young barrister can receive—the praises of those who have briefs to bestow.

The case was so connected with his own part of the country, that it was particularly agreeable to him; and a host of his old neighbours were in

court, the actual witnesses of his talents and his triumph. These he heard, as he came out, saying, "Ay, to be sure; old Mr. Welstead's son is it? Why he quite cuts the old man out, and he's a eminently long-headed man. He will be no little proud, the old gentleman will. Well, and it is enough to make a man proud. What a handsome fellow he is, and what a tongue he has!" "Ay," said another, "and what a feeling for a poor man!" "Ay, ay, God bless him!" said an old woman, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, "and that's the best of all."

As he crossed the court of the County Hall to go to his inn, a knot of old neighbours came up to shake hands with him: they were all rosi-ness and smiles, and having had that honour, they were off home to carry the notes of praise to his native scenes, and to his parents' hearts.

But Tommy Scantlebury got the start of them all. When Charles inquired for him, to send letters off by him to Barhead and Scartland, he found that he had started the moment the verdict was given with a post-chaise and four horses, which had been kept ready before the court-house. He had blue ribbons in his hat, and on his horses' heads, and left a guinea with the hostlers to drink "health and long life to Counsellor Welstead, the friend of the poor man!"

He had gone off amid loud hurrahs, which he returned, waving his hat out of the chaise window. He said he had relays of horses at every stage, and would be at *Barhead* as soon as the crow could fly thither.

Was there not cause for a proud and happy feeling in a young man's heart? His fame was gone out thither, where, in such a case, one would always have it go first, to his home and the home of his heart's chosen; thence it would fly abroad, and his native county would next rejoice in the glory of a new star arising for its peculiar honour.

During the remaining portion of the circuit, he felt the flattering effects of his first opening act. He had other briefs, and numerous promises for the future. Letters came pouring in in a few days, full of congratulations. Need we say, that amongst them were letters from his father and mother, from Clara and Frederica; oh, so warm and glowing with praise, and admiration, and thanks! from Philip and Randall; from Miss Jesse Borringdon and Sergeant Torrent; and one one at sight of which he was startled—from Mr. Frodsham!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE letter of Mr. Frodsham filled Charles's eyes with tears. It would have been a strange sight to many of those who, a few days before, had witnessed his triumphant defence of his client in court; who had seen with what address and ability he had brought forward all the strong points of his case; how he had scattered the base arguments and base mystifications of his opponents like smoke; how he had risen into a glow of indignant eloquence which made all the great and crowded court hushed to the silence of a solitary heath; how his heart had expanded for the interests of the poor, and with what fearless power he had denounced the oppressions of the rich, till he seemed to grow in very stature, to expand in bulk, and rise into a dominion, as it were,

over all mortal circumstances. I say, it would have been a strange sight to the wondering witnesses of this to have seen this powerful and almost awful young man, thus weeping passionately in his room, over a letter. But at this moment, when he was in love and harmony with all the world, and the present and the future were alike lying sunny before his soul, the letter of his generous friend Frodsham made him weak as a child. There was something in it, that, while it forgave, seemed also to admit, though without saying so, that there was also something to be forgiven. It spoke out with all the writer's frankness, in praise of Charles's opening case. It had realized, it said, all that he had expected from him ; and bade him go on, for the highest altitudes of the mountains of the law were open to him. But it added,

“ And when you return to London, need I ask you to come at the earliest hour to see us? To the good and true, anger should not last too long. What is there that the generous cannot forgive? They are the good and the generous who feel most acutely of all men, and are apt, therefore, to wound one another more deeply than all other men, when they conceive that they are not treated with that justice and regard that their high standard of morals and of friendship had led them to expect. The generous make gods of their friends,

and are outrageously wrathful when they find their gods fall, or act unworthy of their divinity. But the wrath of the generous is soon past, and it is due to themselves and friends, to forgive as warmly as they have resented.

“ You will find a *great change* at Walthamstow. You will, however, find errors atoned for, and the tempest which has shaken, has also cleared the atmosphere. All here now is peace, calmness, and affection ; and I will not doubt that your presence will bring with it again some degree of joy.”

We can conceive well enough the reply which Charles instantly wrote. We may be sure of its tone from the fact, that a few more posts brought him a letter from Harriet Frodsham. What a different spirit lived in that letter to what had for months before animated its writer ! It was thus :

“ Walthamstow, July 5th, 183—.

“ DEAR CHARLES,—My father has given me your letter to read. Oh ! how I do rejoice that the cloud and storm are passed away from between us. But yet—how shall I dare to meet you again ? But I *will* meet you, for you are so beautifully generous—you can forgive the weaknesses of your friends. Ah, who could not, to whom Providence has given so much !

“ But, dear friend, I have suffered much since I saw you last, as I deserved to do—as it was good for me to do. I have been on the very closest brink of eternity, and have seen—oh ! what have I not seen ? All my vanity, my pride, my ambition, my falseness, and injustice. Oh ! to whom have I not been cruelly unjust ? But I have paid the penalty of my selfishness ; and as I live, it shall be to mortify my vanity, and to love and honour those whom I have envied and sought to injure.

“ Dear friend, this confession has cost me much ; you can well believe that ; but it is made, and I am the better for it. When you forgive me, as you will, you must make large allowances for a singularly, yes, a singularly excitable temperament ; and—shall I confess it ? yes, it shall out—a boundless thirst of admiration.

“ When I was at Scartland,—that dear but fatal Scartland,—I was, I am sure,—and you must remember this, and let it plead with you for me,—I was, I am sure, not in perfect health of mind ; at least, my mind and my whole frame, were in a state of quivering tension ; and the flatteries and representations of persons whom I felt at the time had their own purposes to serve, fell upon feelings which were ready to start into flame.

“ But enough—God has been good to me. I

feel now so differently to what I have ever done : so calm, so full of a real love to all my friends, and may God grant that it may ever so continue ! Oh ! I would rather die than live over again what I have done ! If you can,—and what can you not ?—set me right with those two beautiful and good beings at Barhead. I feel an infinite longing to win their esteem. Say what you will to them ; hide nothing. You know all ; my dear Jesse Borringdon has told me so ; and, while they have much to forgive and to deplore, oh ! let them learn to love me, if they can.

“Your faithful friend,

“HARRIET FRODSHAM.”

It was in about a month after this, that Charles again visited Walthamstow. We may be sure that to all parties it was no easy affair. To avoid as much as possible all old associations, he took a coach, which arrived just at their dinner-hour. Mr. Frodsham met him without speaking a word, but with a cordial shake of the hand ; and with eyes in which there was an expression of a thousand things, and where tears glistened but did not fall. He then led him up into the drawing room, where Harriet was sitting. Charles's heart beat violently, but he advanced rapidly to Harriet, and without either of them venturing to

look at each other, they clasped hands, and stood thus for some moments in silence. The servant, luckily, announced dinner,—Charles gave Harriet his arm, and Mr. Frodsham followed. It was a strange—and spite of all past and present resolves—a most embarrassing time; and most thankful, we have no doubt, were all parties when the gate bell rung and several gentlemen were seen coming up the walk, who were by no means likely to have known the history of this house during the last few months.

By degrees a general conversation took place, and an outward ease, at least, grew up as the afternoon advanced. Charles took his leave with these gentlemen, promising, however, to come to Walthamstow very soon; and he made it a duty to go there during the week, and, in a long conversation with Harriet, to let her feel how sincerely he still regarded her, and to place both her and himself on a footing of ease and friendship, which they might thereafter maintain.

There was something extremely affecting to him in the traces of those violent emotions and the violent illness through which Harriet had passed; and in that kind and subdued spirit, so different to her former gay and almost wild humour, in which she seemed to seek her security and future peace. Continued intercourse wore away,

by degrees, something of this; and in a few weeks' time, few people who were ignorant of what had occurred, would have seen any great difference in the familiar and friendly conduct of the young people towards each other.

The news from Barhead during this time was important. Sir Thomas Borringdon had returned from the assize at York in the highest state of indignation against Mellor. He had assailed him in the severest and most unsparing terms at the inn, and desired him to wind up the affairs of his stewardship as quickly as possible. The young ladies were rejoiced, and regarded their triumph as completed. But after Sir Thomas's return home, the agitation of his passions, and the wound given to his honour and character in the neighbourhood, seemed to have exhausted his strength. He became feeble and averse to exertion. Mellor professed to be ready with his accounts, and to resign his office; but Sir Thomas let these matters wait for the return of some strength. By degrees the young ladies began to fancy that Sir Thomas's first eager desire to dismiss Mellor had, in a great measure, died out. They were not the less suspicious that influence was at work, on the part of Lady Borringdon, to produce this effect. When they asked at what time Mellor was likely to give up, and whether another steward was in-

quired after, their father assured them, in a feverish tone, that they might leave those matters to him. He was in no state to undergo the fatigue of such things. That it was an easy thing to send away a clever man, but not so easy to replace him.

"But, dear father," said Clara, "only think of this man's character. Only think of his cruelty. What will people say if you keep him?"

"Ay, ay, I know," replied Sir Thomas, "I know what you would be at. But I am not so sure that Mellor is so much to blame. I suspect that impudent youngster of a lawyer had his cue. I don't hear that things are so bad as he represented. I am sure everything looks very well on the estate, and the rental, and the returns of the colliery, never were better."

The young ladies were silent; and the day of change grew, to all appearance, even more distant. But a change far greater was approaching. The vital powers of Sir Thomas's constitution were exhausted. The effects of his Indian life were now becoming too decided for medicine, or any earthly art, to counteract. His strength sunk silently away; and, after being kept up by stimulants for many days, he expired at length when he was thought merely to have fallen into a doze.

David, at the time this news reached him, was

at Heligoland. The northern tour from which he promised himself so much refreshment, had not realized his expectations. The heat of the summer was greater than he had anticipated, and had an exhausting effect upon him. The artist friend whom he had accompanied, sought to amuse him with a generous assiduity that was quite beautiful. But he felt his strength still fail, and the breezes from the Baltic seemed powerless to restore it; nay, even to stem its daily waste. He determined to return home. He was intending to embark at Heligoland in a vessel bound for Hull, when the announcement of his father's death reached him.

The letter from Clara to Charles, which communicated the news of the death of her father, also mentioned the health of David in the most desponding terms. A fortnight after, he received another letter, announcing that David had arrived at Hull, but in so low a state, that it was not found possible to remove him, and that he had sent earnestly begging his sisters and Charles to come to him.

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, Charles set off. With what mingled feelings did he pursue his journey! The great obstacle to his union with Clara Borringdon was removed with Sir Thomas. For three years he had never seen her.

Now he should see her, and feel that she was his own. But poor David!—now Sir David Boringdon of Barhead—he felt sure that they must prepare to lose *him*. He felt that as the force of youth was not enough to save him, no earthly power or science could ; and when at length he stood by his bedside, with one hand holding that of Clara, and the other grasped eagerly by David's skeleton fingers, he saw that the time, too, was at hand.

David was reduced to the last stage of exhaustion. His cheeks were sunk ; his breathing was difficult, and his large, bright eyes were fixed on Charles with an intensity of affection that completely unmanned him.

“ How glad I am to see you, Charles ; I thought I never should ! I thought I must have been buried in the sea ; and I did not want that to be ; for I want to be buried at Barhead ; for you and Clara will live there. Yes, you will. I've made my will, and I've left it to her ; and my Devonshire property too— You will like sometimes to go and see Randall. Ah ! poor Randall, I shall never see him again. I've left all the rest to Frederica, and she won't live far off you. Oh ! it will be a pleasant thought to me—it is one *now*—that I shall be near you. But remember, I won't be laid in that great

ghastly family vault; no, I will lie under the old yew-tree where we've sate so often, and looked over the country.

"Ay, it's a very pleasant place is that Bar-head, and Scartland; very, very pleasant. I've always pleased myself with the thought of living there near you. But it was not to be—no! and perhaps if I had lived it would not. I hear, Charles, you're getting a great man, and you'll be up in London amongst the big-wigs, and wouldn't care for those old woods and pleasant places, as you used to do. Well, God's will be done. But you'll be very happy—you and Clara—God bless you! And Philip and you, Frederica; I wish I could have seen Philip, but I sha'n't."

Frederica here kissed his hand passionately, and bathed it with tears, and laid her forehead upon that pale thin hand, hiding it in the cloud of her dark hair.

"Nay, Frederica," said David, "I can't bear that; don't distress me." And David seemed quite overcome, and shut his eyes.

In a while he said softly, without again opening his eyes: "Oh! how I do wish that I could see your dear father, Charles; but it's too far, and he is old. Ay, he was a father to me—I know he'll miss me!"

“ He shall come and see you, dear David,” said Charles; “ and in a few days I hope you’ll be able to go home yourself. It is the sea-voyage that has overdone you.”

David shook his head.

Charles softly withdrew, and wrote to his father; and in two days the old man was there. He had been driven over in his own carriage, with post-horses; but it was almost too late. David’s strength was nearly gone. He was lying in a sort of slumber when Marcus Welstead came in, but he knew his step as he entered, and he opened his eyes, and put out his hand, and took that of poor Marcus, who was unable to speak for weeping, and pressed it to his heart with both his thin hands; and thus he lay for about a quarter of an hour, when, with one deep sigh, David Borringdon, one of the simplest, truest, and most child-like souls that ever visited earth, was gone to heaven.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHANGES, AND REJOICING.

GREAT were the changes which the events of the last few weeks had necessarily wrought. Sir Thomas and David Borringdon were departed. Barhead was the property of Clara. Lady Borringdon, who had a splendid jointure, soon took her departure for London. The two sisters, Clara and Frederica, remained there; and Miss Jesse Borringdon came down to assist them in arranging their affairs. Dick Mellor withdrew from his office without waiting to receive further notice, but leaving all his books in exactest order; and Marcus Welstead was seen riding over the estate as manager, feeling, we doubt not, great satisfaction in the prospect of its descending to his posterity. Barhead and Scartland, all in the possession of the Welsteads! Well might the

old man's heart expand with pride and pleasure. Charles was meantime in London, acquiring every day reputation and money.

And, in the following spring, there were still greater changes. The house at Barhead was in festive array. The bells of Barhead church were ringing merrily one fine May morning, and from the gates of the churchyard up towards Barhead, was seen a train of splendid carriages ascending, out of which issued into the splendid portico of Barhead House, Charles and Clara, Philip and Frederica, as happy married people, and a whole crowd of friends and relations, amongst whom were Marcus and Mrs. Welstead, he looking as joyous and rosy as a June day, and she as quiet and happy as a June day eve. Then came Mr. and Mrs. Tregellis Randall, George Welstead, and on his arm Miss Frodsham.—Can it really be? Yes, Miss Frodsham was there. She had grown strong and calm enough to be not only present at this gay wedding, but to rejoice at it. She had won a great degree of regard from the two lovely brides of the day since last year, and there was whispered another cause for her presence and contentment,—that George Welstead had been able to win an interest in her heart; and that, ere very long, Harriet Frodsham would be the wealthy mistress of Scartland Manor!

Mr. Frodsham, something older for the wear and tear of the last two years, walked in, leading Miss Jesse Borringdon; and, need we say, that with youth, love, happiness, old friends and new prospects, Barhead was that day—a paradise, for a few hours. In the afternoon, travelling carriages were seen rolling away down the steep, and for some months Barhead remained the stately but solitary haunt of the happy old Marcus Welstead and his horse.

Twelve months afterwards, had we gone thither, we should have seen a large and gay party of friends there, amongst whom Charles and Clara Welstead would have been found as radiant and beautiful as youth and happiness could make mortals, while the bells were ringing, because George Welstead had brought his bride to Scartland.

In the following year, Mr. Frodsham, resigning his share of practice to his partners, located himself in the village of Scartland, to which also Marcus and Mrs. Welstead had removed, and into a handsome house, of dimensions more accordant to their present establishment. Philip was residing, a most excellent clergyman and happy man, on his living at Birkleside, seven miles off; his Frederica being the admired and beloved

friend and benefactress of the whole neighbourhood.

At the present hour Charles Welstead is still rising in his profession. He has got his silk gown, and Mr. Serjeant Welstead bids fair to be the judge and the peer. Will not Clara make a noble baroness?

For years did Marcus Welstead and Mr. Frodsham go on hand in hand as friends and as magistrates, at Scartland. Mr. Frodsham's great legal knowledge threw a lustre on the bench where he now acted as a magistrate; and his knowledge of life, and sound and well-informed judgment, made him a welcome addition to the best society of the neighbourhood. Every year he went up to town in May, and took up his abode at Charles Welstead's ample town-house; there he remained for about a month, refreshing himself with the society of his old city friends, and with the topics and events that are always alive in the great capital. Till Marcus became too infirm, he generally accompanied him, and it became a great source of pleasure to Mr. Frodsham to point out to his friend all that he considered curious and important in the metropolis. Together they frequented their club and read their papers, and together they returned to dine.

These annual visits tended greatly to enliven and furnish matter for their existence in the country, where Marcus had it in his power to give his friend the benefit of his more intimate knowledge of rural life. To Marcus his friendship was perfect happiness.

Theirs was a beautiful, a useful, and a blessed old age. They saw their children, and their children's children, living and flourishing on their fine estates. The Yorkshire Family was become a great and prosperous family indeed. One dark cloud did once gather near it,—and that was in the marriage of Jack Danvers and Lady Borringdon, whose threatened presence at Yoxby Lodge foreboded many unpleasant consequences. But, as if the sunshine of prosperity that lay on Barhead, Scartland, and Birkleside, were too strong for their eyes to endure, they rarely came there, but took up their abode on a property in the south of England; and when they did visit Yoxby, the great esteem and popularity of the Welsteads had their effect on them, and they became extremely polite, and that goes far.

Five years ago died the good old Marcus, full of years and content. In the friendship of Mr. Frodsham he had found a peculiar pleasure. It was the golden glory amid which his evening

sun went down. The two old men had been seen from day to day on horseback, or on the magisterial bench together; and amid the glad spirits of their grand-children, they were bright and happy as children themselves. When Marcus was on his death-bed, he made the last request of his friend,—“ We shall be parted for awhile, my dear friend, but as years roll round you won't forget me ; but only remember that we are getting nearer and nearer to each other. Our New Year's-day we have for these ten years spent together in God's blessed peace and gladness, and don't let this custom be quite broken off. Come, my friend, every year on this day, so long as you can, and walk across my grave, and say, as you have been used to say, ‘ Welstead, my friend, a happy New Year!’ and I shall then know what the day is, and how the years go round.”

And faithfully to this day does his friend observe this custom, and reverently fulfil his wish.

There are but a few words more and we have closed our history. Jacob Scantlebury and his wife, and his horse, all sleep well in the green earth; the two former in the churchyard, the latter in the orchard of Hodden Combe.

The mill still grinds away merrily, for George Welstead is a great and active manager of his

estate, as his wife is a gentle and much-beloved woman.

As Clara was much in town with her husband, Frederica and Harriet became more thrown into each other's society, and a bond of union grew up between them, that every year made stronger. There was something in Frederica's cordial and sunny and buoyant spirit, which seemed particularly necessary to the heart of Harriet Welstead, who was observed, from the period of the temporary breach of her family with Charles, never to entertain that firm confidence in her own judgment which she had done before. There was a wound somewhere in her bosom which never thoroughly healed, though she was happy in her domestic life, and perfectly happy in her friendships. Diffident and desponding even at times, as she had become, Frederica and Philip too, who continue greatly to esteem her, always declare that in all matters of taste, and in insight into the hearts and characters of those about her, they knew nobody like her.

Tommy Scantlebury is no longer at Scartland, for George Welstead never held his talents in very high esteem, but he has reached the height of his ambition—to serve Mr. Serjeant Welstead as the steward of the Barhead estate, with all its mines and works. He holds in perfect reverence

the learned serjeant; a reverence wonderfully augmented the day that he heard him deliver his first speech in the County court at York; and he regards him with good reason, as the great mainspring of the revived and flourishing fortunes of THE YORKSHIRE FAMILY.

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There can be no question that the "Memoirs of the Reign of George II." far exceed in public interest any of the numerous productions of the same accomplished pen. The writer was in a position either to observe the extraordinary events then occurring, or to command intelligence from the most secret sources. Known as the son of the ablest minister the age produced (Sir Robert Walpole) and having many of his nearest friends and relatives members at different periods either of the government or of the opposition, it is impossible to imagine an individual more favourably circumstanced to record the stirring scenes and great events that made the reign of George II. so remarkable. But to these advantages must be added a talent in portraying the characteristics of his contemporaries, and a vivacity in describing the scenes in which they figured so conspicuously, in which he is without a rival.

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It may be as well to remind the reader that the reign of George II. was rendered memorable by the dawning of the greatness of Pitt, and the minority of George III.; by the struggles of the grandson of James II., commonly called "The Young Pretender," to win back the forfeited throne of the Stuarts; by the opposition to the reigning king of his son Frederick Prince of Wales; by the remarkable trial and execution of Admiral Byng, and the no less celebrated court-martial on Lord George Sackville; by the splendid victories of Wolfe in America, and Lord Clive in India; the capture of Cherbourg, the acquisition of Cape Breton, and the naval triumphs of Boscawen, Howe, Hawke, Watson, Vernon, and Saunders. The most distinguished of contemporary sovereigns were Frederick the Great, Louis XV., Augustus King of Saxony, the Czarina Elizabeth, and the Empress Maria Theresa; and in consequence of the interest George II. took in his Hanoverian dominions, the English were continually engaged in the war then raging in Germany, in which these sovereigns were involved.

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